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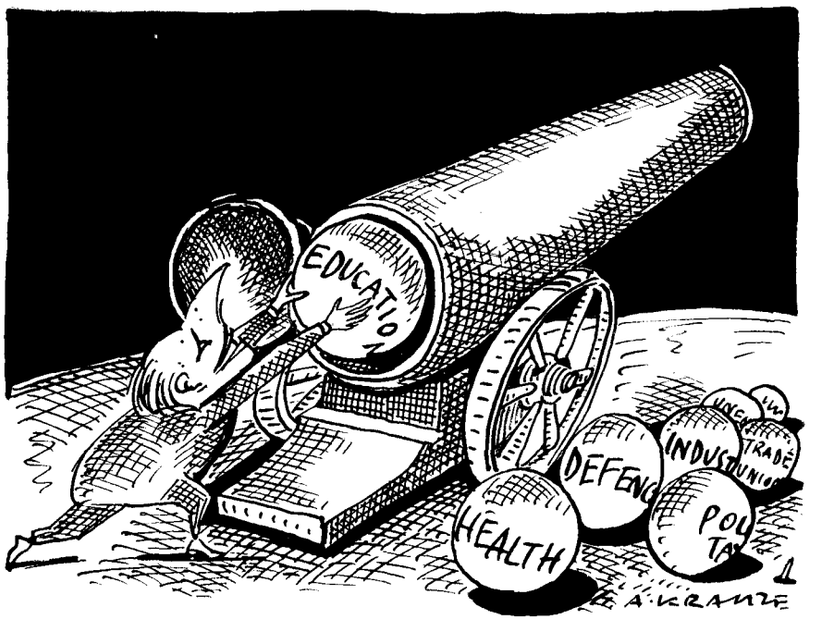
Pink guards

Unseen by the media, Labour at Blackpool was going through a cultural revolution of its own



The Labour Party is going through two revolutions. The first is top-down and has been celebrated endlessly this week in the quality press. This is Neil Kinnock's hard-worked transformation of a disintegrating political party into one gravely dedicated to winning back power. Certainly, the conference hasn't given Kinnock everything he wanted; but no one in Blackpool could miss the confidence, discipline and good sense of the delegates. They believe that they can win in 1991-92 and are willing to be marginalised in the process. They accepted the fact that Neil Kinnock's own major speech was directed not at them, but at a television audience of "conservative" middle-class voters that the party must win over if they are to win.

That's why they doggedly gave him a six-minute standing ovation after a speech which was framed more defensively than any he has given at party conference. Kinnock and his frontbench team are determined not to give any hostages to fortune for what they all know will be a very dirty election campaign.

The second revolution is not so obvious, partly because it is unfinished, and partly because Labour spin-doctors are not assiduously polishing its surface. Neil Kinnock took over a Labour Party in 1983 which was not just internally divided. The fact is that both right and left had no idea where to go next politically. Callaghan's government had exhausted the capacity of the social democratic right's managerial creed. By the end, it aimed no higher than seeking to manage Britain's downfall as painlessly as possible.

The left was in an even worse position. Its alternative strategy was for Britain to turn its back on the modern world and to develop a siege economy: socialism in one country, so to speak. Thus, when Kinnock, ostensibly then a man of the left, took over in 1983, the left, of the hard or soft variety, had nothing to offer him—though the soft left at least had the sense to give Kinnock generous backing and saw, as he did, that a progressive Britain's future lay in Europe.

The party's official policy-making apparatus has been unable to fill the void in strategic thinking, which is why a largely friendly quality press still insists that Kinnock should produce a "Big Idea" that will clinch the party's newfound respectability. (No one should underestimate how strongly most of Britain's opinion-makers want to believe in a Labour victory; it gives Labour a strong following wind in the quality media.)

No "Big Idea" emerged at Blackpool. But a profound cultural change took shape instead. As we write, it seems that the TGWU delegation at Blackpool has decided unanimously that it should back moves to consider electoral reform of first-past-the-post voting for the Commons along with other elected bodies. Last year in Brighton, the argument for electoral change was won. This year, the trade unions have been won (though John Edmonds, at the GMB, remains implacably opposed). The TGWU decision creates a strong left-right axis, the TGWU/AEU, for a change which could fundamentally change the Labour Party and the movement too.

That change is away from the closed mind of labourism, which has always relied on Labour's privileged place in the electoral system to remain in touch with power. To accept electoral reform means to accept a more open and pluralist style of politics—and to make democracy the cutting edge of left politics in Britain. The new argument in the party—which you could hear at a variety of fringe meetings, but most notably at the influential Labour Coordinating Committee's gathering—is that democratic change in Britain is the key to social and economic change too; that Britain's obsolete institutions are not robust enough to allow Britain a place in the modern world. This argument is largely heard at the grassroots, but it is taking place in influential places too. Neil Kinnock has, for example, wisely given Robin Cook, one of his party's brightest thinkers, licence to argue the case for electoral reform. But Cook has also been questioning the undemocratic nature of parliamentary sovereignty and "strong government" in powerful speeches for more than a year now.

The trade unions are generally regarded as being an obstacle to change in Labour politics. But they might actually become the fulcrum of change. No one should underestimate the power of Labour's Brezhnevite rump, in national and local politics as well as within the party and trade unions. It is incapable of defending the status quo by argument, and therefore seeks to block all debate. At Blackpool it has become clear that it can no longer do that.

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Win now, fight later

The United States has already won its war against Iraq. Only if the shooting starts will it begin to lose again. This paradox explains the dovish noises heard this week. George Bush hints that withdrawal from Kuwait could herald a Palestinian settlement, while Pentagon deep throats suggest that the guns will stay silent—at least until the new year. The last superpower has woken up to one remarkable fact. In the global foreplay of intelligence and diplomacy it has snatched more satisfaction than a closer encounter with Saddam will ever yield.

Look, through US eyes, at the list of items in the credit column now: the UN purposeful; the Soviets quiescent; the Europeans docile; the Israelis on the leash; the Japanese writing cheques; and the Arabs corralled into an alliance that Washington has sought for 40 years. When the brass hats waved their weapons around a few weeks ago, they assumed that a drive to liberate Kuwait could ratify all these gains. What lies behind the softening tone and the "wait for sanctions to bite" message is a dawning realisation that the US campaign may have peaked.

Anything that happens now will fragment this textbook picture of a new global order. Fighting, even on a limited front, will loosen the Arabian connection, upset western opinion and menace long-term US interests in the Gulf. Worse, from Washington's perspective, is that even the success of the sanctions-plus-military encirclement route to Iraqi retreat could have the same effect. Saddam or his successors would work to prise open the gap between stated US aims—for Kuwaiti restoration—and the tacit goal of a Middle East locked permanently into pro-western deals. Either way, today's consensus will dissolve. No wonder the White House wants to hang fire while backstairs diplomacy collects dividends. George Bush is in the unique position of taking the spoils of victory *before* the bullets fly.

Unreasonable force

In the wake of the killing by soldiers of two joyriders in west Belfast on Sunday, one would have thought contrition might be in order, together with apologies to the distraught parents for such an awful mistake. Not a bit of it. "This sort of tragedy flows from the terrorist situation here," intoned John Cope, Northern Ireland minister. "The responsibility, the cause of this violence," echoed Ivor Stanbrook from the Tory backbenches, "is the fact that the IRA are on the streets of Ulster."

Martin Peake and Karen Reilly were the ninth and tenth victims of security-force killings of joyriders in the past ten years. This dreadful record is hardly surprising when the judicial constraints on exercise of lethal force by the police and army in the province are so lax. Under the Criminal Law Act 1967, they can use such force as is "reasonable in the circumstances". The European Convention on Human Rights contains the tighter requirement that lethal force should be exercised only where "absolutely necessary".

Much more than that was used on Sunday. Much more, too, was used in January when three petty robbers were blasted to bits by an army undercover unit at a bookmaker's in west Belfast. The attorney-general has been consulted on whether there will be prosecutions. Expect a Stalker re-run.

Martin Peake had had his leg and arm broken in an IRA beating for previous such "offences"—not the first youth engaged in "antisocial behaviour" to whom the Provos have brutally applied the philosophy of "deterrence". To share such a manifestly ineffectual penal policy with Ivor Stanbrook should perhaps give the IRA pause for thought.

The boy done well

Labour's conference was short on passion. Almost the only burst of rhetorical excitement came from an unexpected source: Tony Blair, its employment spokesman.

It is accepted Labour wisdom that if you want to push through a policy that will upset the faithful—as Blair's distancing of party from unions has done—and if you have the handicap of a privileged background, you must accompany it with a lather of synthetic indignation. It always sounds fraudulent, and has hurt Labour badly over the years. Blair has never indulged in it. So his expressions of anger at Tory misdeeds came over as sincere, and moving. The speech marks him out as a future leader.

Even more impressive than the manner was the substance. More than any of his colleagues, Blair set out a concrete agenda of measures Labour will introduce, in refreshing contrast to the timidity and vagueness of so much economic, defence and social policy. Enforceable union membership rights; defence of part-time workers; strengthened equal opportunities laws; a hard-edged commitment on minimum wages; above all, the pledge to invest massively in training.

Here, finally, is some red beef in the Kinnockburger. It's a genuinely radical programme. True, much of it is prefigured, or even made necessary by the EC social charter—but Blair made a virtue of necessity. More important, he also put morality back at the centre. On blacklisting, for example, his stance was everything that Roy Hattersley's has *not* been: "such practices are utterly incompatible with basic civil liberties. We shall make them illegal."

Picking Peter

The BBC's choice of Peter Mandelson, Labour's director of communications, as an adviser on the defence of the broadcasting policy is like using a red rag as a bull-tranquilliser. It is precisely Mandelson's success in transforming Labour's image that disqualifies him from being an effective rebutter of the Tebbit campaign of harassment.

There's a dismal appropriateness about the appointment being made in the same week as the publication of Woodrow Wyatt's so-called impartiality amendment. The very word "impartiality" is ironic because it arises from a political climate where the concept is derided.

As in so many cases, Margaret Thatcher has here stolen the ideological clothes of the left. It was they who first mounted a sustained critique of notions of objectivity and fairness. Did not all broadcasting defend the interests of the ruling class? And there has been a good Marxist logic about the government's assault on public broadcasting: the democratically elected government represents the will of the people; objectivity is supporting the government policy which, by definition, embodies that will.

That's why the Windlesham report, exonerating *Death on the Rock*, was so ineffective. The facts—bourgeois notions of truth, as they might once have been dismissed—are irrelevant: you are either for us, or against us.

The amendment is just the latest example of what Ronald Dworkin calls "a notable decline in the *culture* of liberty". The BBC must oppose it; the Labour Party must fight it. But prudence suggests they must do it separately.

David "six million didn't die" Irving, the right-wing historian, has circulated the following letter: "Modest and self-effacing though I normally am," he writes, "I cannot forfend *[sic]* to draw attention to the fact that I, as an historian of German politics, was seemingly the only person to predict the reunification of Germany on October 3. I did so on October 3 last year, and got it right to the very day: in the press conference that I called... I told the media: 'you won't believe this. But within 12 months Germany will be re-united.'"

This is the monkeys-and-typewriters principle: sooner or later, even David Irving will say something correct. But it's been a long wait.

Charter 88 is holding a "vigil for a modern democracy" this Saturday, highlighting reform of the judiciary. It's on the steps of St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, from 2.30pm to 4.00pm. For details, phone Pam Giddy on 071 833 5813.

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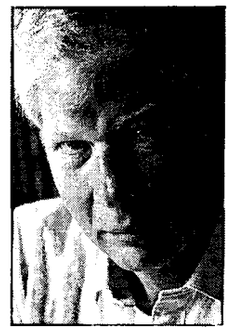
POLITICAL COLUMN

Leading nowhere

Labour is too weak to win alone. The party must lead a broad anti-Thatcher front



R W Johnson

Readers of this column over the past few years will be aware of my constant theme that Labour, starting from a position of historic weakness, cannot afford simply to muddle through the next election in the way it normally does; that, on top of that, the party is handicapped by a yawning leadership deficit, which further narrows the options; and, accordingly, that it desperately needs to develop and lead a broad anti-Thatcher front with the Liberal Democrats and Greens. Returning to this column after a period away, I have to confess to a sick foreboding as time slips away with none of these problems addressed.

For Labour's spring tide has ebbed. Labour's giant lead earlier this year was largely a function of the poll tax and that issue has, inevitably, lost salience; in March, half the electorate said the poll tax was the most important issue influencing their vote; now only 27 per cent do. Worse still, as the severity of the economic crisis deepens, it begins to look as if Labour is in a heads-I-win, tails-you-lose position on this central issue. If the economy goes badly, the Tories are favoured as more competent in a crisis; if the economy goes well, the Tories get the credit.

This lack of confidence in Labour as manager of the economy stems from a disastrous lack of confidence in Labour's leadership. The situation is frankly awful: NOP found that a 60-34 per cent majority (+26) thought the Tories had good leadership, but that a 46-43 per cent plurality (-3) thought Labour didn't. That is, in a poll which put Labour ahead by 44-39, there was a "leadership deficit" of 29 points. There is no doubt that the Gulf crisis has strengthened Thatcher's position: Harris found that the number of voters wanting her to resign immediately has fallen from 58 per cent in April to 31 per cent now—a huge improvement. Mori showed why: 40 per cent thought she was good in a crisis, but only 8 per cent thought the same of Kinnock. As a patriot, she headed Kinnock 35-21; as a capable leader by 39-24; in understanding world problems by 27-22. ICM showed that, as choice of "best prime minister", Thatcher has gone from a 36-32 lead over Kinnock in June to a 45-32 lead now.

Perhaps most damning of all were the data from the odd-man-out NMR poll giving Labour a 19 per cent lead: even in that highly favourable sample, 46 per cent thought Kinnock not clever enough, 47 per cent had difficulty taking him seriously, 34 per cent said he was prone to lose his temper, and 27 per cent of women thought he was dominated by Glenys. NMR also found 57 per cent believing that Labour would be unable to defend the currency.

These figures could not have deteriorated so quickly had not the underlying situation been so weak. After seven years of Kinnock's leadership, there is no point in pretending—as is the wont of the conference-time hype articles now so liberally scattered across the press—that this situation is going to turn round. Given our increasingly presidential system, Labour is effectively advancing towards battle with a wooden leg and blindfold.

This is kamikaze stuff, with the difference that these planes are diving into their own carriers

This weakness is not new: it's well established and remarkably stable. It means, I have repeatedly argued, that Labour simply has to build a broad front. If Labour now dominated the Tories in terms of leadership and intellectual authority in the way that it did under Wilson in 1962-64, then just conceivably the party could have afforded to go it alone. But it doesn't and won't and it needs a record swing to win. So nothing less than an electoral pact, cemented by the elaboration of a common programme and a joint campaign—in a word, the whole Mitterrand strategy—would do. Such a front would have taken several years to build and, crucially, had to be in place before, constituency by constituency, candidates began to be irreversibly selected. We are now right up to that deadline. A historic opportunity is now almost gone.

It is difficult not to tear one's hair as one sees what this means on the ground. Take the seat where I work, Oxford West and Abingdon. In 1987, the Tory (John Patten) led the Alliance by 9 per cent, with Labour trailing in at 14.9 per cent and the Greens at 1.3 per cent. In any sensible world this would be a prime candidate for a deal, with Labour and the Greens getting clear runs (with Liberal Democrat support) in other seats as their reward. Even in 1987 a Labour candidacy there was pure idiocy. (The Labour candidate actually called for the Alliance candidate to stand down so as not to split the anti-Tory vote...) Now Bruce Kent has been selected as the Labour candidate and is off and running. He is a nice, sincere and extremely honourable man, but his candidacy is merely guaranteeing Patten re-election. The same pattern is beginning to recur across the country. It is real kamikaze stuff, with the difference that these planes are diving into their own carriers.

Back in April, I warned that the Liberal Democrats would bounce back, that third-party politics was not dead. Since then the LD has scored well in the local elections, is back up to 12 per cent in the polls and is now probably on the brink of a major by-election success at Eastbourne, which would carry it higher still. Kinnock, belatedly sensing danger, has now decided that he will not oppose a Speaker's conference on electoral reform to be held after the next election.

It would be interesting to know what strategic assumptions lie behind this move. Doubtless, it is meant to placate the growing band of Labour MPs favouring electoral reform. It is also a small wave of an olive branch to the Liberals and to floating centrist voters. But one suspects that this particular flag has been hauled up the pole to keep the door open for a last-minute bolt towards an electoral pact if the polls begin to look really bad. The deal could then be for mutual withdrawal of candidates in a restricted number of seats in return for a Labour commitment to take a "sympathetic" view of electoral reform after the election.

Such a deal would fall a long way short of a properly worked-through united front which has gained real popular roots and a sense of its own momentum. Indeed, the danger exists that such a death-bed conversion could produce a messy, cobbled-together deal, making what should have been a principled crusade look like the worst sort of opportunism. It is going to be a long 18 months to the next election. It is asking too much of a columnist that he should hope that his own arguments will prove to be wrong, but it is a matter in which I shall feel little pleasure if, as I still believe, they are right.

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TAKING LIBERTIES

Jolyon Jenkins

In any event involving children and politicians, I think we can be clear for whose benefit the proceedings are organised. Saddam Hussein's television appearance with nine-year-old Stuart Lockwood differs only in degree from Mrs Thatcher's posed photograph with eight-year-old Robin Raven, taken at the weekend's United Nations summit on children. For the child, the only rational response is a well-aimed vomit.

And yet, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, passed last year, and around which the summit revolved, is a splendid document. Fifty-four clauses long, it's a comprehensive statement of legal and social rights—everything from the right not to be sexually exploited to the right to education. So far, 109 countries have signed it (not including the United States) and more than 40 have ratified it (not including Britain).

The UN has produced lots of conventions and protocols like these. Most share one great flaw: even when ratified, they cannot be enforced by citizens against government (unlike the European Convention on Human Rights, which can). But countries which ratify the convention on children will have to produce a regular audit of their children's welfare, which at least opens up the possibility of public embarrassment.

Child prostitution, torture and starvation may not be common in this country, but when scrutinised against the convention, Britain does not stand up well. Most obviously, of course, we do badly on social rights like childcare provision and child benefit. But even with basic civil liberties, we fall well short of the convention's requirements.

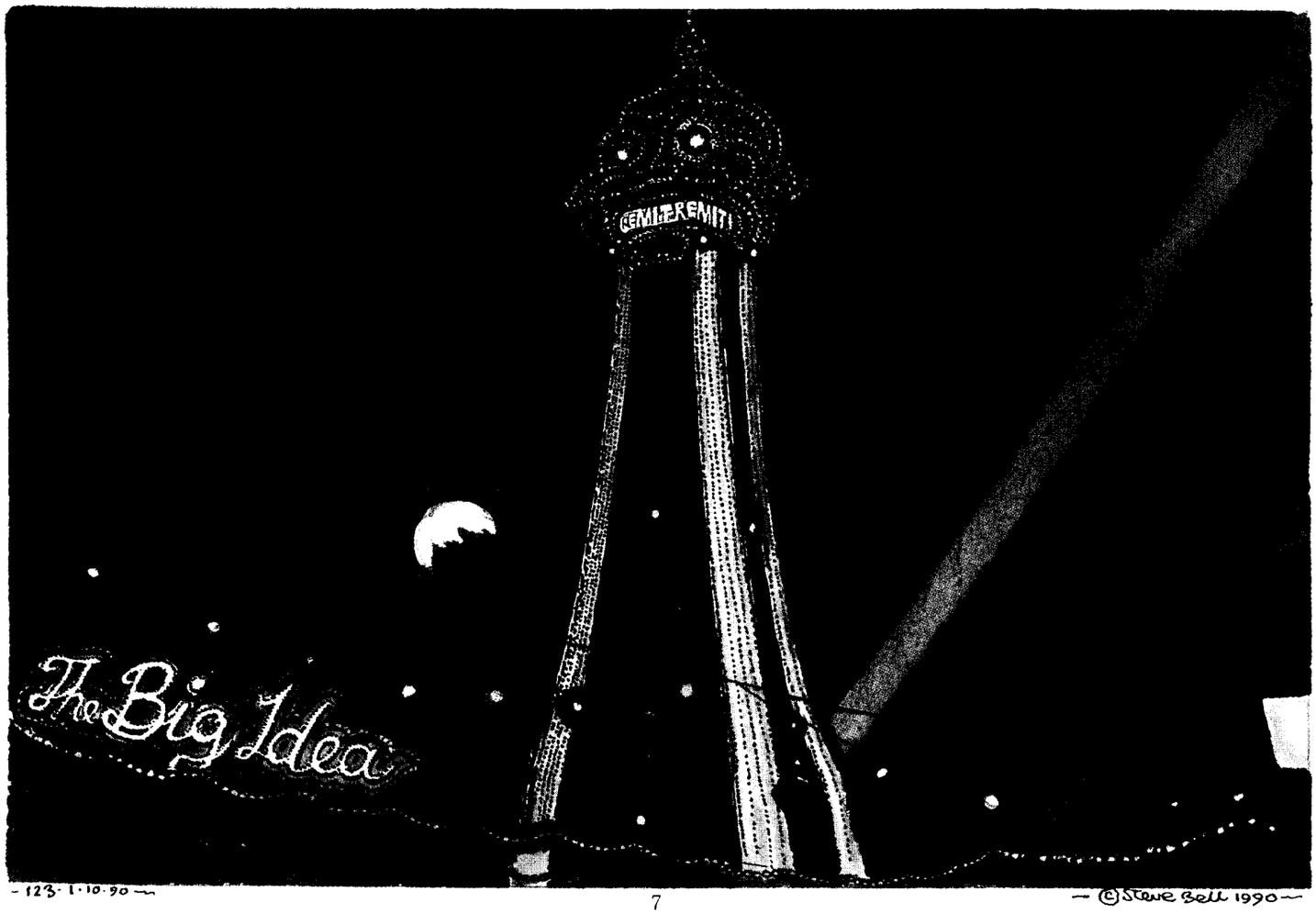
Children are not supposed to be imprisoned with adults, says the convention, but they are: there are 15-year-old boys remanded in adult jails, and 17 year olds (children, according to the convention) are treated on the same legal basis as 21 year olds.

"The child," says the convention, "shall be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial *or administrative* proceedings affecting the child." (My italics.) That applies, presumably, to decisions taken by schools or education authorities about, for example, excluding children from school—where, at the moment, only the parents have the right to be heard.

States are supposed to protect children from *all forms* of physical and mental violence. That, then, outlaws corporal punishment—which is still legal in private schools (and in the home).

Children have the right to a nationality, says the convention. But, under the 1981 British Nationality Act, children born in Britain can be stateless. Similarly, according to the convention, children have the right to be united with their parents. But an Indian child who has been looked after in India by her grandparents will not have the right to join her mother resident in Britain, because our immigration rules say that a parent must prove that he or she has always had sole responsibility for the child's upkeep.

None of this will cause Mrs Thatcher much alarm. Even if Britain ratifies the convention, it can, and almost certainly will, enter reservations—that is, state which bits it does not intend to abide by. So far, the government has stonewalled any parliamentary attempts to find out what reservations it has in mind. And when it does decide, you can bank on rather less publicity than the Prime Minister generated for herself in New York.



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DIARY

Sean French

Newspapers and magazines generally have some sort of style book which regulates matters most readers probably don't even notice. Do you write "finalise" or "finalize"' or do you not use the word at all because it is a barbarism invented in the fifties by General Eisenhower? Among my principal memories from my earlier career as an editor are bizarre discussions about whether a comma ought to come outside quotation marks or inside.

Style books usually embrace more provocative issues as well. Most national newspapers now shrink from reproducing supposedly obscene language in full, but do you write f**k, f***, or even ****? The familiar argument for doing this is that these words attract more reader complaints than any other issue, but I'm not at all clear why it is less offensive to signal the same word in a different way. If anything, it is forming a conspiracy with the reader to utter a rude word. You say "f-" and the readers mentally say "—uck" to themselves. And if you say "****" the poor readers have to supply the whole "fuck" themselves, to do something that the newspaper won't lower itself to.

And there are occasions where only one word will do, as was amusingly demonstrated by Mark Lawson's interview with David Attenborough in this week's *Independent* magazine. Attenborough observed that in his previous nature series "It was enough just to show [a rare species]. The new series is about how animals use their bodies..." Lawson commented: "This is his characteristically discreet way of referring to creatures sleeping with each other and eating each other."

I assume that some sub-editor altered this from "creatures fucking and eating each other", on which the joke surely depends. One can hardly point to Attenborough's prudishness while using the term "sleeping together" to describe animal copulation.

I don't think that "sleeping together" is right for animals, anyway, even as a euphemism. The point of the phrase is at least partly to suggest that sex is something embracing more than what Alex in *A Clockwork Orange* called "the old in-out". However, I may be doing the *Independent* subs an injustice. Perhaps the *Trials of Life* will show us humming birds sitting at a candlelit table, penguins engaged in foreplay, whales struggling with a condom, ibexes lighting up a post-coital cigarette, in which case I shall apologise humbly.

On the whole, though, I'm generally more surprised by what newspapers *do* print than what they don't. I wasn't interested in seeing the television dramatisation of the marriage between Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West, *Portrait of a Marriage*, but the response by male journalists was a revelation. I have never understood why men are supposed to be so threatened by lesbian sex. In fact, I sympathise all too much with women who prefer women to men. John Naughton, the television critic of the *Observer*, described Vita Sackville-West as an "Edwardian grotesque" and her affair with Violet Keppel as "kinky". Why?

Godfrey Smith in the *Sunday Times* was genuinely bizarre: "I remain deeply unconvinced about the need to expose us yet again to this emetic chronicle of two upper-class bitches on heat." The only emetic thing is Smith's own repulsive language which crudely manages to yoke together misogynistic abuse and sexual disgust.

It's revealing how naturally the two can be united in the English language. What language would Smith find to smear the more acceptable homosexuality of Harold Nicolson?—if he wanted to, that is. Smith, however, is keen on Nicolson: "Harold Nicolson remains the true hero of the sordid chronicle... While Violet and and Vita were making their hysterical foray across France, calling for more cash from Harold when they ran short, he was working on the Versailles peace treaty. He was appointed to the new League of Nations—but Vita had never heard of the league. She was too busy living—if that is what it was."

Notice, incidentally, how the man is dignified by his full name, while the women are reduced to their first names, just as literary critics discussing *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* used to talk about "Jane". I do, though, fondly remember one female critic gaining some revenge by writing a book in which she referred to James Joyce throughout as "Jim".

Behind Godfrey Smith's dismissal of Vita Sackville-West there is a fatuous evasion of what was possible for a woman during the early 20th century. But anyway, why should we fall down on our knees before someone who helped draft the catastrophic Versailles Treaty and then worked with the ineffectual League of Nations?

And as for Godfrey Smith, if I were to talk of him in the sort of language he uses to describe these women, then even if I could actually find the appropriate vocabulary, the *Statesman* would be almost certainly driven out of business by the resulting legal action from News International. So I'll just say "*********" and leave the rest up to my dirty-minded readers.

The great thing about the *Sunday Times* magazine's "Life in the Day" feature is that it allows celebrities to sabotage themselves. Michael Ignatieff's reputation will probably never recover from his own raptured account of his new man-ness.

This week, I loved Helena Kennedy's account of the way she spends her morning before going out to subvert the system. She and her children go downstairs "where our au pair will have got things ready. We employ a nanny as well, whose job is caring for the children, but it's essential to keep everything running smoothly when Iain and I are both out all day."

Those of us who are interested in modern linguistic usage will need to turn our attention to "essential". She continued: "I think of myself as the managing director for the domestic side of life. I am amazed how few men understand what a lot of effort goes into maintaining the social fabric of life as well as the basic organisation."

I'm very glad that Helena Kennedy's domestic life runs smoothly but do I have to perceive it as oppressively difficult as well? "A woman's work is never delegated," as Basil Fawlty once put it.

ROGER WODDIS

Hard times, soft centres

"In times of recession people like to indulge themselves on the smaller pleasures of life."—a Cadbury's spokesman on a Gallup poll that shows people turning to chocolate as a consolation for financial hardship

Whenever I feel depressed,
Because of the shrinking pound,
And worry about NatWest
Sending the heavy mob round
(Not that they ever would—
What a kindly lot they are!),
I fervently knock on wood
And munch on a chocolate bar.

And it's not only Palmers Green,
Where the lowly-paid and the skint
And the homeless who haven't a bean
Seek solace in Krunchee-Mint:
What strengthens them north and south
And the hospitals closed by cuts
Is toffee that melts in the mouth,
Enriched with honey and nuts.

When the good times come to a halt,
And the victim kneels to the knife,
He thanks his Maker for malt
And the smaller pleasures of life.
A slab that's sweet to the tongue
Helps him to work, rest and play.
(And it comforts the skeletal young
Who die in the world every day.)

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OCTOBER AUTHORS AT

WATERSTONE'S

121 CHARING CROSS RD, WC2 *tel:* 071 434 4291

THURSDAY OCTOBER 4TH AT 8.00PM

TARIQ ALI

will be reading from his first novel *Redemption* (Chatto, £13.99)

TUESDAY OCTOBER 23RD AT 8.00PM

JUAN GOYTISOLO

author of *Landscapes After Battle*, will be reading from *Realms of Strife: A Writer in Paris* (Quartet, £15.00)

THURSDAY OCTOBER 25TH AT 8.00PM

GRANT NAYLOR

will be reading from *Better Than Life* (Viking, £12.99), the sequel to *Red Dwarf*

SATURDAY OCTOBER 27TH AT 1.00PM

POSY SIMMONDS

will be signing copies of her new book *The Chocolate Wedding* (Cape, £12.95)

SHERRATT & HUGHES
17 NEW ROW, COVENT GARDEN, WC2
tel: 071 836 6757

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 3RD AT 6.30PM

SOPHIE GRIGSON

will talk about and sign copies of her new book, *Sophie's Table* (Michael Joseph, £14.99) and will give a cookery demonstration

TUESDAY OCTOBER 9TH AT 7.00PM

CLAIRE MACDONALD

a tasting and talk about traditional Scottish food and drink, by the author of *Claire MacDonald's Scotland* (Bulfinch, £17.95)

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 17TH AT 6.30PM

ROBERT JOSEPH

author of the *Sunday Telegraph Good Wine Guide 1991* (Pan, £6.99), will be hosting a wine-tasting

SUNDAY OCTOBER 21ST AT 1.00PM

LAURIE GRAHAM

will be reading from and signing copies of *Generation Games* (Chatto, £8.99), a collection of extracts from his three years as a columnist for the *Daily Telegraph* BRUNCH WILL BE SERVED

THURSDAY OCTOBER 25TH AT 6.30PM

KEN HOM

will be discussing his latest gastronomic odyssey - *The Taste of China* (Pavilion, £19.95)

68 HAMPSTEAD HIGH STREET, NW3
tel: 071 794 1098
OPEN LATE: 9.00pm Mon-Fri; 8.00pm Sat/Sun

THURSDAY OCTOBER 4TH AT 7.00PM

MARTIN AMIS

will be reading from *London Fields* (Penguin, £4.99)
THIS EVENT IS BY TICKET ONLY
PLEASE CONTACT THE BRANCH FOR DETAILS

TUESDAY OCTOBER 9TH AT 7.00PM

PETER ACKROYD

will read from and discuss his approach to his new biography of Charles Dickens - *Dickens* (Sinclair-Stevenson, £19.95)

TUESDAY OCTOBER 16TH AT 7.00PM

BOOKER PRIZE EVENING

DETAILS TO BE CONFIRMED
an evaluation of the shortlisted books for the 1990 Booker Prize, on the night of the announcement of the winner

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 17TH AT 7.00PM

SEBASTIAN FAULKS

literary editor of *The Independent* will read from his highly praised first novel *Girl at the Lion d'Or* (Vintage, £4.99)

THURSDAY OCTOBER 18TH AT 7.00PM

JENNY DISKI

author of *Rainforest* and *Nothing Natural* will read from *Like Mother* (Vintage, £3.99)

TUESDAY OCTOBER 23RD AT 7.00PM

DOUGLAS ADAMS

author of *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, will read from and discuss his new book *Last Chance to See ...* (Heinemann, £14.99) written in collaboration with zoologist Mark Carwardine

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 31ST AT 7.00PM

HUGH JOHNSON

author of *The Story of Wine* (Mitchell Beazley, £25.00) will share some of his expert advice on wine and offer samples from Oddbins for tasting

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The final curtain

A united Germany is again the dominant European player. Fred Halliday on the implications of the passing of the east

The unification of Germany this week marks the end of a nightmare and of a dream. The nightmare began on 30 January 1933, when Hitler became chancellor—the last freely elected prime minister of a single Germany before Kohl—and plunged his country and the rest of Europe into 12 years of turmoil and murder, in which tens of millions died. The dream was that of creating a separate socialist state on German soil, in the German Democratic Republic. The GDR, established in 1949 in the zone occupied by Soviet forces, was never accepted as legitimate by the mass of its own population and was never a rival for the much larger and more successful capitalist state in the west.

Unification, and the site of its enactment, are not simply the property of the right. When Marx and Engels drew up the programme of the Communist Party in Germany in 1848, the very first demand was: "The whole of Germany shall be declared a single and divisible republic." A similar ambivalence applies to Berlin, for this is the city that encapsulates so much of the German tragedy, the pain and the reversals that marked both the nightmare and the dream. The capital both of the Prussia that united Germany for the first time in 1871, after defeating France, and of Hitler's Reich, it was also the site of many of the greatest attempts to challenge the established regimes: the Spartakist uprising of 1919, in which Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht lost their lives, the socialist and artistic movements of the 1920s, the workers' uprising against Soviet domination in the east in 1953, the mass student protests of 1968 in the west, against the war in Vietnam.

Berlin was the symbol both of imperial and Nazi vainglory and of the cold war; divided, blockaded, scarred by destroyed buildings and shootings on the wall. The opening of the wall on 9 November last year hastened the process of unification and drew the line on almost 60 years of violence and division. But it will be a long time before the people of Germany, or those outside, can resolve what either of these two elements in their recent history involves.

The search for explanations in national stereotype, of the kind proffered to Mrs Thatcher by a group of tame Anglo-American intellectual courtiers some months ago, is childish. So, too, is any explanation based on historical inevitability or repetition, as if there is something in the German society or strategic situation within Europe that is bound to lead to a repeat of earlier wars. What happened in Germany was the most horrendous disaster of European history, and there can never be absolute certainty that something like it will not happen again: the sober fact is, however, that if it does recur, it may not be in Germany but in some other supposedly civilised and developed country.

As Arno Mayer has shown so well in his study of the extermination of the Jews, *Why did the Heavens not Darken?*, these events were not providential, ordained by fate or God, nor were they predetermined from the start. Hitler, for all his individual lunacy and mystical nationalism, arose out of a social and international situation that made it possible for him to come to power, democratically, and to impose his dictatorship: national humiliation, economic crisis, racist intolerance of diversity, disputed frontiers, irrationalism in political and intellectual life. None of these is peculiar to the Germans.

Whether the Germans themselves have come to terms with that past is one of the central elements in current international concern, as well as in the country itself. In a way, the answer is evident. Some, including the great majority of the younger generation, have. The emergence of neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic currents among some young people, especially in the east, is sickening; it is not a national trend. Far stronger are the anti-nuclear, ecological, feminist forces. More doubtful is the situation among older Germans, and, not least, some current leaders.

Helmut Kohl himself has exhibited an odious and disconcerting ambiguity on this issue: welcoming Reagan at a cemetery containing SS tombs, visiting a church in Poland notorious for German chauvinist rallies in the 1920s, equivocating until very recently on the eastern frontier.

The emergence, after the second world war, of a divided Germany was one answer to the question of ensuring that Germany never posed a threat to the world again. Yet it rested upon a premise that could not, in the long run, hold. This was that the occupying powers, and particularly the US and the USSR, would continue in effect to control their German partners for ever. The US managed the Federal Republic much more loosely than the Russians ran the GDR, but, in one key respect, the US role was vital: by locking Bonn into Nato, it precluded the Germans from getting nuclear weapons. Indeed, given the illusory character of the Soviet "threat" throughout the cold-war period, it may be that, in historical retrospect, this was the main achievement of Nato.

The Federal Republic did not, however, rely on US military strength to remain in existence, whereas the GDR, for all its economic strength, did continue to depend on Soviet tanks. At first, it did not appear to be necessarily so.

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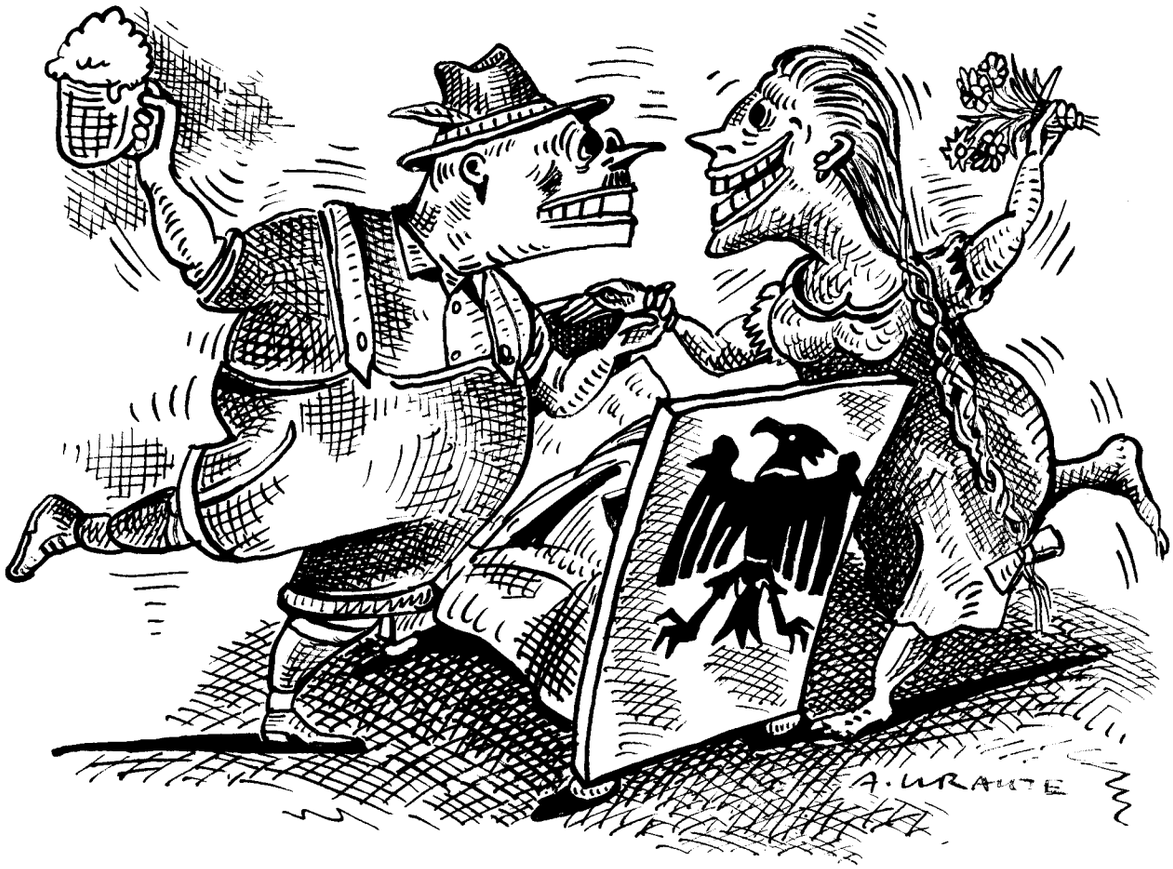

Many who had opposed Nazism, such as Bertolt Brecht and Stefan Heym, looked to the GDR as an alternative Germany, an attempt to realise, on at least part of German soil, the dream that the German socialist movement, once the most powerful in Europe, had fought for. The imposition of authoritarian political control and the suppression of the 1953 uprising killed off much of that hope. Even with the building of the wall in 1961, a glimmer remained: that finally, with the haemorrhage of people to the west blocked off, it would become possible to build up a socialist model in the east.

By the late 1960s, these hopes too had been dashed: the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 destroyed belief in a democratic transition within eastern bloc states, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s the Federal Republic outstripped the GDR in economic as much as in political terms. Once it became clear, in the summer and autumn of 1989, that the USSR had removed its military guarantee to the GDR regime, the edifice came tumbling down in short order. The overwhelming majority of the population of the GDR are clearly in favour of uniting with the Federal Republic, but the pace and manner of their unification have been dictated not by them but by the priorities of Helmut Kohl and the Bundesbank. Kohl's ten-point plan for unification, laid out on 28 November of last year, was a call for capitulation: not just the merger of the state, but the destruction of any vestige of distinctness in the east.

Much is made of the inefficiency and non-competitiveness of the GDR's economy: but this is something hastened by western pressure—rumour and innuendo from the government, the driving out from the market of GDR goods by western firms. The GDR is being treated now not as a lost relative, but as conquered territory, up to and including the dismissal from their jobs of those disliked on political grounds—this by a Bonn government that has long harboured many a veteran of the Hitler regime. Inexorably, not just the ruling party in the east, but those who spearheaded the opposition last October and who wished to preserve a distinctive model of society, have been strangled by the python of the west.

As for German unification being on condition that the new state be neutral and demilitarised, this too was swept aside, as much by the international balance of forces and the current weakness of the USSR, as by the political balance within the country. Germany's economic preponderance and strategic centrality in any future Europe are inexorable.

Prior to the recent agreements, there was a dangerous ambivalence in the official German position, and nowhere more so than in the equivocations of Kohl on the border issue. It was not for nothing that one of the main official holidays of the Federal Republic was 17 June, the commemoration of the 1953 uprising in the GDR, but turned into one for the *Vertriebene*, those millions of Germans expelled from eastern Europe at the end of the second world war. Thus, the issue of denying the legitimacy of the GDR and the reclaiming of the "lost lands" of Silesia, Pomerania and East Prussia were linked. What the current settlement makes possible, but not inevitable, is that these two are now separate: the "lost lands" are lost for ever, the GDR disappears.

Whether the new united Germany poses a long-term threat in political and military terms depends above all on two things: whether the integration of the GDR can be achieved relatively quickly and successfully, thus avoiding major social upheavals in which a new militant right could emerge, and whether the international situation acts to encourage a more peaceful, integrated, Germany. The actions of others have long played more than a marginal role in determining what Germany does: had Britain and France signed a military pact with the USSR in 1938 there would have been no second world war; if people in Britain or France are worried about Germany's future military potential, they should start by setting a good example and getting rid of their own nuclear weapons.

Germany's future international role depends, as it has long depended, on more than the Germans. ●

Fred Halliday will be writing a regular monthly column on international affairs.

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RITUAL ABUSE

Vortex of evil

Evidence that children have been ritually abused is being dismissed as a myth emanating from evangelists and gullible do-gooders. Social worker Judith Dawson describes children's own evidence of ritual abuse, torture and murder in Nottingham, and the social workers' clash with the police. Beatrix Campbell asks why their evidence is disregarded

A contagion is spreading throughout the land, one that is insidious and dangerous. This contagion takes the comforting form of sceptical and rational inquiry, and its message is comforting too: it is designed to protect "innocent family life" against a new urban myth of the "satanic" abuse of children inspired by evangelical fundamentalists. Social workers are depicted at once as all-powerful professional zealots who brainwash children into evil fantasies, and as credulous dupes who will believe ridiculous tales of witches, wizards and inquisitorial tortures. But as long as they are discredited and the public remains on guard, the children will remain safe.

Will they? In just a few weeks, this contagion has demonstrated a devastating power that has deeply impressed the Nottingham team in which I work. For three years we have worked with children who have been grossly abused sexually, and physically tortured in a context that would be difficult to describe other than as "ritualised". During the past few weeks, our personal and professional reputations have been eroded; the patient care and testimony of foster parents has been discredited; and the children's own accounts of their experiences have been almost totally disbelieved. Those experiences constitute a kind of holocaust and are similarly as hard to believe. We did not ourselves want to believe that such dreadful tortures could occur in apparently civilised society, and we do not blame others who still wish to avoid that reality.

But after two years of enforced silence, we have decided that the time has come to speak up. The department asked us not to disclose the conflict with the police over the evidence the children gave of ritual abuse. We agreed to wait until normal working processes would remove the "personality clashes"—which was how the profound gulf in attitudes and experience between social workers and police officers was regarded. But now a secret-inquiry report on our work, prepared by police and social services officers with no child abuse pedigree, has been leaked to television and the press to accuse us of poor practice and to discredit the children's testimony. This report is inaccurate and unreliable. Yet it is now being mobilised to criticise other social workers—in Rochdale and elsewhere. We feel that we have a responsibility to counteract that. The only way that society can come to terms with child abuse, its extent and the forms it takes, is if the public is fully informed. We are charged by the public to respond to abuse and to protect children, but how can they know what to ask us to do if they do not know what we have to deal with?

Social workers are the only statutory advocates that abused children have. Historically, children who have been abused have had to deal with not being believed and the abusers have relied on that. We have a responsibility to the children who have trusted us with their accounts. They have a right to have their experience properly told and evaluated. We are now hearing from adult survivors of ritual abuse, and other abused children. It is important that someone validates their experience.

In the summer of 1987, one of our area officers wanted to remove eight children from a family on suspicion of incest, neglect and physical abuse. Seven other children from this extended family were already in care: taking away the remaining children would thus remove an entire generation of grandchildren. Children from the family had first come to the notice of social services nearly 20 years earlier, and, in 1975, the father (now the grandfather) had been imprisoned for incest with his daughters. The social services department set up a special team to deal with the case—Team 4—and planned a joint operation with the police. There was then goodwill between the police and social workers: we were determined to work together and to resolve the real difficulties that arose.

The case progressed and the children were protected through wardship proceedings. Twenty-five children were finally taken into care. In February 1989, nine adults—eight

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of them from the same family—were imprisoned for up to ten years after pleading guilty to 53 charges of incest, cruelty and indecent assault. Lord Justice Farquharson singled out the social workers for praise in court and the Prime Minister also praised them in parliament.

After the children had been in care for a few months, they began expressing fears and reporting activities that indicated a serious and unusual type of abuse. These children, living in what the trial judge described as a "vortex of evil", had been born into a culture of multi-generational abuse. Their homes and families were meeting places for paedophiles of both sexes. They described how they were passed around adults, abused and tortured, sometimes daily; and how they were forced to watch the same things happening to siblings and cousins. They were starved, physically injured and humiliated.

We do not know for certain what these children experienced. We do know that the abuse was so horrific, and that they were so terrorised, that the effects on them were like those reported by victims of torture. All who met the children testified to a level of fear they had never encountered before. Their accounts built up a clear picture of children being abused for the gratification of adults interested not in sex itself, but in its use as a tool for the promotion of ritualistic acts. They say that they were made to stand in circles, being orally and anally penetrated by adults in strange costumes; that they were forced to eat excreta and to drink blood from animals; that animals and human babies were killed before their eyes. We do not know if these events all took place, but we do know that the children believe they did, and are able to describe them in the most minute detail.

Their evidence emerged not through the "disclosure work", which is now being derided in the media, but through informal conversations between the children and their foster parents. Ironically, the team had felt that it was not appropriate to hold formal disclosure interviews with very young, traumatised, children. The children showed an unusual degree of fear, even for children who had only recently been received into care. Our judgment was that they needed to be treated as any others and given a safe, confirming environment. They were placed with ordinary families, they went to school and watched television, they were fed and watered and loved, and they were able to talk naturally to those they trusted most, at the times when they felt they wanted to.

We went through a long process of not accepting what they said to us as reality, because we had not experienced it before. It is said that we believed everything the children said. Clearly, we could not do that: it is not that children necessarily lie, it is that they sometimes do not make sense of things in a way that adults can. At first, we interpreted what they said as a contorted fantasy, the symbolic expression of the torture they had experienced and witnessed. They talked about snakes being inserted into their bottoms. Several of us had been psychodynamically trained, and we were easy meat for the obvious interpretation: the snakes were a symbol for the penis. But the children would draw a snake that had been inserted in their bottom, and they would draw a penis. They knew the difference.

There came a point where we had to challenge what we wanted to believe. We realised that we were falling into the same trap that Freud had. As we listened, as we saw the terror, the trances, the rituals they described in detail, we realised that these children had been born into a world where good had to be destroyed, innocence perverted. It was difficult to hear properly at first—difficult to grasp how evil people could be. The social work profession derives from an optimism and belief in the innate potential for good and for change.

Piece by piece, too, the children's accounts corroborated each other. The terrified little boys who had been taken into care first had talked about monsters, the snakes and "the master". Then children who were taken into care later also talked about people dressing up and the "big master". We took care to stop the children communicating with each other outside the groups they were placed in. At this stage, we were concerned only to stop the possible contamination of disclosures of sexual abuse; we were unprepared for the traumas, over and above those usually associated with child abuse, which the children were to describe. We knew it would be hard to prove the abuse of so many children without the added complication of these bizarre disclosures. But we felt that we had to submit all the evidence we had to the police, and not to determine which evidence was unbelievable, and therefore unacceptable.

The team's social workers explored all the obvious explanations for what the children continued to tell us: the influence of videos, childhood nightmares, symbolic language, emotional and material deprivation. But none of these could explain the extreme phobias, vivid descriptions and personal knowledge that the children displayed. It is being said that we were influenced by our consultations with occult groups, but the children's disclosures came first. We felt that we had to take on this research to make sense of what they told us. Similarly, others suggest that we were given "indicators" that made us too open to the idea of ritual abuse. But we were not given the "indicators" until we'd already heard the children's stories.

It is really a totalitarian nonsense to imply that additional knowledge produces a closed mind. The police would say to

John Birdsall Photography

Team 4—the special squad of social workers set up for the Nottingham child abuse case. Judith Dawson is in the centre, wearing a floral jacket

We too have felt betrayed and, have learned like the children, what it feels like not to be believed

Judith Dawson is principal professional officer, child protection, with Nottinghamshire social services

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The evidence of ritual abuse

- **The children talked of being penetrated by sticks and snakes**
- **They talked of being shut in cupboards and boxes, occasionally with snakes and insects**
- **They talked about spiders being placed on their genitalia. They were afraid of spiders and other insects**
- **They talked about being taken to places for ritual abuse and pornographic videos—places they could later identify**

Louise Kelly

- **They talked of being burnt by sticks**
- **They talked of a Father Christmas who hurt them**
- **They were afraid of dangerous fingers and fingernails**
- **They talked of being painted on their faces, bodies and genitals, sometimes with blood**
- **They talked of animals being sacrificed and drinking the blood**
- **They talked of being forced to eat excrement**
- **They talked of children being killed and their bodies being disposed of. Adult women corroborated what they said**
- **They talked of babies being placed in the centre of a circle at parties and then being injured**
- **They talked of parties where people dressed up as witches, clowns and monsters**
- **A girl described how she was laid on a table and had her stomach ritually cut open. Other children talked of this ceremony**
- **They talked of tunnels in a cemetery which the police could not find, and then showed them to their foster parents**
- **They talked about being buried up to their necks in the ground**
- **They talked about being injected with needles and being given orange liquids and tablets that made them feel strange**
- **They talked about Latin chants, red table-cloths, candlesticks and goblets**

List compiled by Stuart Weir

us, "Ah, well, if you actually learn about such things, and do research into it, then you will find it." It is a nonsense, because if anyone were investigating an art fraud, they would consult experts who knew about art and paintings. There are two features of the new mythology. The first is that we were too gullible; and I now have to preface every talk I give by saying that we are a secular team, that we do not believe in the devil nor in God, we do not believe in external forces, we do not believe in the power of witchcraft. We all, however, believe that some adults will use any means to terrify children into silence, and that children, through drugs, trickery and suggestion, can be made to believe anything. The second is that a few of us are so powerful that we have imprinted our own beliefs on other social workers, the foster parents and children, and High Court judges.

To suspend our own disbelief in order to make sense of the children's world was one thing. To try to persuade others, like the police, who need to offer a service to these children is another. We had to struggle to work with the police. No one is to blame for this, but the public needs to know that it is a struggle.

The police wanted us to keep the evidence about ritual abuse out of the court hearings (though some was given in the wardship proceedings; the judge believed the children and described it as "satanic"). That seemed fair. Everyone agreed the children had been grossly abused, sexually and physically, and there was sufficient evidence to make the children safe, and secure convictions. The evidence of ritual abuse would only complicate an already complex enterprise. The real conflicts began when we asked the police to investigate the children's continuing allegations—which involve other adults outside the family. Senior police officers then tried to intimidate social workers and threatened to discredit us if we continued to ask for further investigation.

There is a damning circularity about what happens. One of the arguments being used against us is that no one has been convicted in court of ritual abuse. That is because it is largely kept out of court. But, equally, if such cases did come to court, they might very well be lost because there is also very real difficulty in finding evidence strong enough for convictions. But the police must investigate—thoroughly, and on the basis of believing that it could happen. It is too early to close the investigation and the debate. That is why we have taken the decision, with all the risks that it entails, to make our experience public. We are doing so in alliance with the foster parents who feel vilified and discredited. They fear that any child placed with them in the future who talks about bizarre abuse won't be believed because it will be assumed that they have led the child into saying it.

We are all ordinary women and most of us have children. We have had fairly quiet lives and we would prefer to get on with those lives. But over the past year, our lives have been taken over by the need to defend the children and ourselves. The decision to put our professional reputations at risk was taken some time ago when we decided we would go on with it. So though we are apprehensive because we don't know exactly what will happen, we are no longer apprehensive about the danger of losing our jobs. We have already come to terms with that. We have been threatened by the police, we have been intimidated in a sense through the inquiry report, we have been warned off by people in the occult world. We have become immune to that, too; we just take a corporate view of what we ought to do, and do it.

It is not easy. We too have felt betrayed and have learned, like the children, what it feels like not to be believed. The strain on ourselves and our families has been incredible. And through the whole process, the hassle, the intimidations, the lies and the misrepresentation, we have had to concentrate on the torture that these children experienced. Even if they have not suffered each thing in physical detail, for somebody to have made them believe that they have is torture all the same. It is beyond belief. ●

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Children's stories

Beatrix Campbell

What is it that makes so many commentators rant so capriciously when children try to tell us something we didn't know? For that is what we've been subjected to over the past few months as the revelations of organised and ritual abuse of children have filtered through to the public domain.

What characterises almost all of the mass media commentaries and purported investigations of ritual abuse is their ignorance and their arrogance. The authors should know that there are children right now who are confronted by panic and denial of a struggle to survive torture which has been nothing less than heroic. They should know, too, about the consequences for adults, mainly women, who at first didn't know what these children were talking about, but whose commitment to the restoration of these children's humanity disposed them to listen, to learn, and to love them.

Together they are showing us something terrible about the oppression of children, and that's why the press are culpable—they have made it almost impossible for these women and children to speak. Almost. With luck they will insist that their new knowledge is shared, but the mass media should know that it may already be too late, and if it is, then the media and the managers of institutions responsible for the protection of children will be to blame.

The *New Statesman & Society*, which should have known better, reckoned in its 21 September editorial note that the accounts of ritualised abuse given by children themselves, are "scant evidence indeed". Really? Children's revelations are the only new data resource we have. But their efforts to explain have been allegedly discredited by lack of evidence and the denial of evidential status to real, live, speaking human subjects.

The evidence of children, earnestly expressed, is dismissed as the effect of fantasy, lies and videotape. The current confusion surrounding evidence calls to mind the deadly consequences of just such a lacuna in the hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper. The police were mesmerised by a material object, a cassette tape, which misled them, while they squandered the evidence provided by the survivors that turned out to be true. Those women were treated with the same disrespect as the women and children now providing the evidence of organised and ritual abuse.

The crisis, then, is not really about evidence at all. It is about the *difficulty of detection*. The problem is not the survivors' stories, it is the institutions which are now being confronted by their own failure. It is a failure to comprehend the clues and to find the culprits. The current controversy protects us all from the consequences of that failure—the retreat from child protection.

Our recent promise to take responsibility for the pain of children's oppression has been short-lived. No sooner was the sexual abuse of children finally acknowledged than it was denied. Children are once again designated tendentially dishonest and undeserving. Now they must provide the proof before we will devote time and resources to their protection and challenge the perpetrators.

The case of Nottingham is a paradigm of the problem—17 children, all cousins, provided their carers with volumes of information. They came to be believed by their foster mothers and social workers. The police decided that the children's elaborate descriptions of ceremonies, cruelty, sexual abuse and pornography could not all be true. Their testimony was mobilised for the prosecution in a successful sexual abuse trial. But it was discarded when it roamed into the realms of ritual abuse. For the police, it was simple sexual abuse within a conveniently deprived and depraved family. But we must wonder: why were witnesses reliable when it came to sexual abuse, but unreliable when it came to rituals? Why did social services and police managers affirm child protection staff when they uncovered sexual abuse, and then punish them when they insisted on respecting children's accounts of ritual abuse?

The Nottingham case mirrors the Cleveland controversy. What was constructed in the popular imagination as a case of inappropriate intervention by child protection workers was, in reality, a case of police refusal to do their job—to investigate serious suspicions of sexual abuse. In Nottingham, too, it is the police who have refused to act on the uncorroborated evidence of children. The police have withdrawn from cooperative investigation and intervention, and have run back, aloof and defensive, into the bunker of professional autonomy. This simply shrouds their refusal to respect the children who helped them put nine adults behind bars.

There is a class component here. The drama of self-discovery which enabled the chidren to share their secrets is as much to do with class as it is to do with childhood. It was their cultural, economic and emotional poverty that left them defenceless against private degradation, just as it was exactly that which brought them into public protection.

Their new-found safety enabled the discovery of selfhood and thus the strength and stamina to share their deadly secrets. Yet one of the causes of their referral, their economic and emotional deprivation, was deployed against them by the joint inquiry team set up by the social services director and chief constable. The report is peppered with disdain for these courageous children. They are described as being of low intelligence, alias poor proles. There are no concessions to the effects of their oppression. It is still a secret report, but its leaked contents have redefined the child protection agenda. These were children subjected to permanent and casual cruelty. Their bodies were rented out. They were thrown into a web of ceremonies that were about nothing if not power and pain. When they came into care, their anxiety and alienation amounted to mortal fear. They feared for their lives because they had seen other people and animals lose theirs.

The *NSS* seems to share Elizabeth Wilson's confused and confusing case that there's a moral panic about pornography, paedophile rings and satanic ritual abuse, and that it is all a ruse to divert attention from the real problem—the family. But the Nottingham case exposes their alibi. The police insisted that the criminal case be confined to the family.

And the inquiry team, aghast at the children's temerity, mocked their allegations that they had been abused by posh people in posh houses. How could such a disgraceful, scruffy family keep company with the rich and respectable?

They didn't stop to wonder how children from a ghetto on the edge of town, then living with different foster mothers, in different places, identified at different times the same places and the same perpetrators miles away from their original habitat. Nor does it explain why young adult women also corroborated both the children's allegations of sexual abuse within the family, and of the rituals outside it.

Ritual abuse is about oppression. Part of the social workers' resilience in supporting the children and their foster mothers lies in a sense of solidarity and empathy that derives from the fact that, as Judith Dawson puts it, as women they know something about oppression. ●

The inquiry team mocked the children's allegations that they had been abused by posh people in posh houses. How could a scruffy family keep company with the rich and respectable?

Beatrix Campbell produced and presented this week's Channel 4 Dispatches programme on ritual child abuse in Nottingham

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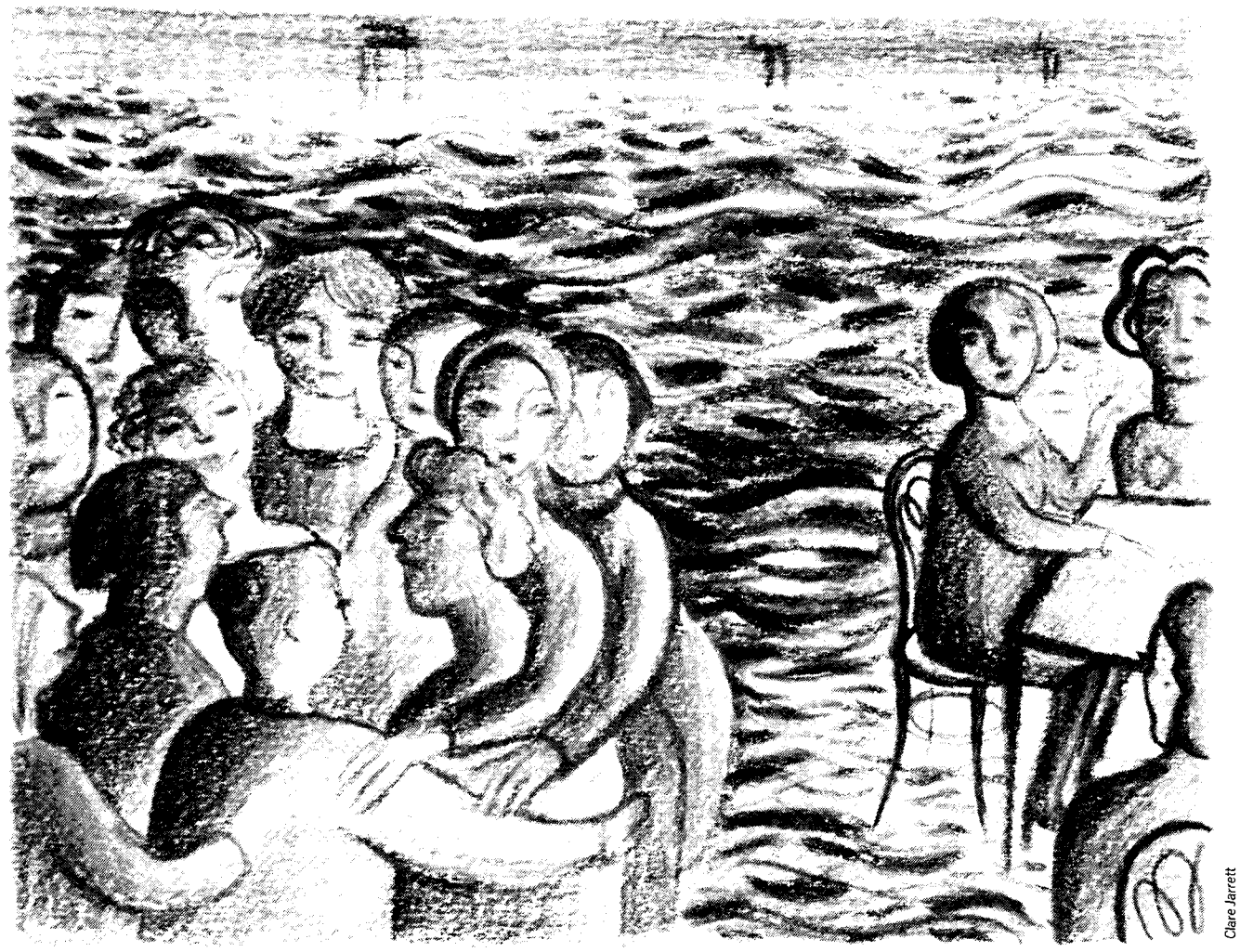

Clare Jarrett

Stand by your man

The North Sea oil dispute has galvanised a new spirit of solidarity among the families onshore. Sarah Barclay and Stuart Cosgrove find Scottish rig widows doing it for themselves

The two-weeks-on, two-weeks-off lifestyle often causes families severe stress, and there is a high incidence of break-ups and divorce. A Shell survey conducted in the 1970s suggested that "2/2 shifts even interrupted women's menstrual cycles, making it difficult for them to conceive." The system still continues in most of the North Sea.

Lorna Robertson stands out in Aberdeen's chaotic Offshore Information Centre (OILC) office as the only woman among a seething army of oil workers. As the centre's director, she joins the men in a common purpose, to pass on news to strikers and blacklisted workers and their families, provide legal and financial advice, and, most important, offer reassurance to families who feel isolated and vulnerable.

The phones never stop ringing. Most calls in the past few weeks have been from distraught women trying to sort out family finances since their husbands have been laid off. Lorna's man, back from a 25-day sit-in on one of the Brent platforms, goes off to buy her some chips. Lorna has been in the office 15 hours a day for the past three weeks and can't remember her last square meal.

She's well placed to give advice. Lorna has been a so-called "rig widow" for the past 20 years, grappling with the problems and emotional difficulties of having a partner who spends two weeks at home then two weeks offshore. The term "rig widow" has come to be applied not just to women who have literally lost partners in accidents and disasters, but also to women who are temporarily without their husbands for two weeks out of every month while they are away doing shifts in the North Sea. For some women, the separation is difficult, but for others the lifestyle is liberating. Lorna says she falls into the latter category, the merry widow. Used to that way of life, she finds the prospect of her strikebound husband being onshore for the foreseeable future rather daunting. At least when he's away, "you don't have to cook the tea every night."

The recent dispute over safety and union recognition on the rigs has magnified the needs of women and highlighted their isolation. It has become painfully clear how little information oil companies are prepared to divulge—"they

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treat people like numbers"—and that many women have found themselves unprepared to deal with the situation because their partners have never really talked to them about conditions and life on the rigs. One woman, who frequently has letters published in the OILC monthly paper, *Blow Out*, signs herself "Married to a Zombie", a reference to the difficulty many nightshift riggers have in readjusting to the routine of normal family life.

Ann Bone is an Aberdeen social worker who set up the Piper Outreach project to monitor and counsel Piper Alpha survivors and their families. "Survivors come back different people," she says. Many have difficulty holding down another job; they have drink problems, insomnia, personality disorders, which frequently disrupt home life. Yet it is women who are coming forward to air their problems: "Men often have such a macho image and won't seek help," says Bone. A women's group was formed and became an overnight success, yet it was the first time many of them had met together: "They thought it was just their problem, then discovered it wasn't."

But while the present upheaval in the North Sea may have contributed to the bonding of working-class oil families, it has done little to alter the age-old rift between working-class and middle-class families. No clearer is this divide shown than in the organisation of the Petroleum Women's Club, a society set up to provide a social life for oil company wives but which has no riggers' wives as members. There's nothing in the small print to exclude them, it's just an unspoken assumption.

"I don't want to sound like a snob," says the wife of an executive, also on the PWC committee, "but... well, that's just the way it is." The same suspicions that are present between the white-collar executives and the riggers are mirrored onshore between middle-class American, Dutch and Scottish women, and the majority of the local working-class oil wives. They are as likely to mix as petrol on a puddle. It's an opportunity missed, as a lot of the PWC members share the same feelings of isolation and disorientation as the wives of riggers.

For many, the isolation is stronger than simply having a partner offshore: it is that loneliness combined with a homesick expatriate lifestyle of endless shopping and bridge mornings. Aberdeen is infamous for its roving Texan and Californian women shoppers, hoovering up expensive bargains as they tour around the antique shops. Many women who uproot to follow their husband's work don't even speak the language. One remembers her own difficulties when she moved to Oslo: "You don't understand the simplest things. It took ages before I found out that it cost the same for a whole salmon as for two cutlets."

"I'd rather be lonely in Aberdeen than in Malaysia," says another stop-at-home executive wife, who calculates her husband has been away for at least half of their 17-year marriage. Even her oil-rich lifestyle, with a house in the country and a couple of horses, is no consolation. "You can fill your days, but not the evenings—it's terrible coming back to an empty house. Ordinary friends don't realise the problems we have. Everyone in the club is in a similar situation." It sounds a familiar story.

The Petroleum Women's Club provides a focus for activity for several hundred women in Aberdeen and several thousand worldwide. Its offer of reassurance is to provide regular routines, so that, however alienated women find themselves, they know that in Oslo, Aberdeen, or Singapore there will always be bridge on Tuesday mornings and handicrafts on Thursdays. But it seems like a poor substitute for the solidarity that the more radical OILC women have been able to engender and which, politics aside, has given them a self-esteem and purpose that is hard to imagine can be derived from coffee mornings and card drives. Ironically, it's the affluent Petroleum Club wives who could be seen as the poor relations, and the OILC rig widows the lucky ones. ●

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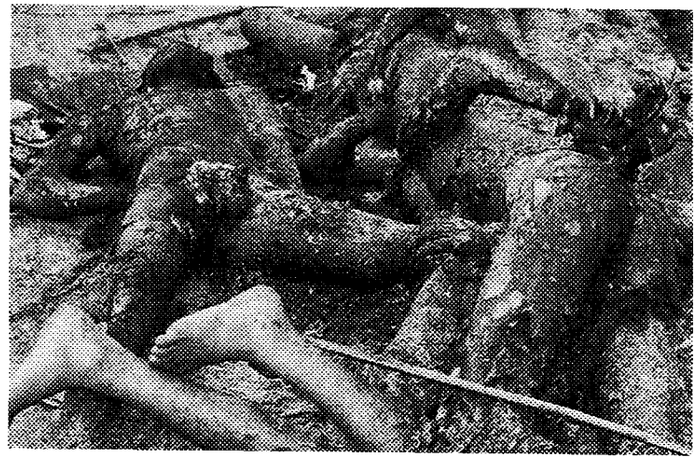

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CRIME

Law and disorder

What do the record-level crime figures tell us about our society? Jeremy Seabrook detects a deafening official silence

The experts are baffled. As they pore over the new crime figures, they admit themselves confounded, reduced to such paltry comforts as seeing a lower rate of growth in crimes of violence and sexual offences than in crimes against property. What is worrying is not so much the figures themselves but the experts' bafflement over them, their unaccustomed wordlessness on the issue.

The crime wave ought to be seriously discomfiting for a party of law and order. If the Conservatives really were dedicated to the values they claim to uphold, such flouting of all they believe in could never have occurred. Of course, it is possible the British people have become more wicked in the past decade, or that a better-equipped, higher-paid police force has become suddenly indifferent to the task, but even the hushed experts baulk at such implausibilities.

Conservatives are swift to point out that much crime is "opportunistic", like car theft, which is blamed on increasing ownership (thereby managing a little oblique self-congratulation on their wealth-creating successes). Labour, a more recent convert to law and order, claims that much of the crime now swelling the figures simply went unrecorded before. It promises more research (relief for more experts who will doubtless come up with more blank incomprehension at the end of expensive, in-depth studies).

The "debate" about law and order (as with that around the family, or any other Great Social Issue of Our Time) demonstrates the mystified impotence of the powerful and mighty in the presence of intractable and unwanted blemishes on what is agreed to be the best of all worlds. Conservatives have become fond of pointing out that the 1930s, an era of widespread poverty and unemployment, was a relatively law-abiding time. They conclude that deprivation cannot therefore be a cause of crime, and, at a stroke, undercut opponents' claims that all that is required is more money to alleviate the despair that drives people to crime.

Here we are getting close to the heart of the matter. Labour is being taunted for the fact that it long ago ceased to contest the legitimacy, the values or the consequences of an economic and social order that it once had pretensions to challenge. This is perhaps somewhat harsh; but Labour has been forced to observe a stoical silence on moral and social issues by its long-term collusion.

If this were not so, Labour might be able to probe the obvious; namely, that the growth in crime appears directly related to the increase in wealth that Labour has agreed is now the sole object of political endeavour. It is precisely the single-minded promotion of economic success, whether or not this leads to enhanced human well-being, that lies at the root of the present malaise. The possibility that the realm of economics might not be the proper place in which to seek answers to questions of morality, ethics or values is the heresy that Labour has abandoned in exchange for the institutionalised and subordinate position it has been granted within a system it has largely ceased to criticise. Thus Labour finds itself concealing the cruel truth that the upsurge in crime is the only logical response by certain sections of the poor to the exacerbation of their condition.

Within the spectacularly growing economy of the past ten years, there has been a double turn of the screw on the poor. As the majority becomes richer, a minority has been further impoverished. At the same time, that majority is more and more dependent on a continuously rising income to maintain that sense of material advancement in their lives which is the sole measure of human happiness known to capitalism (and which actually represents a privatisation of earlier ideas of *social* progress). The cash economy continues to expand, but the poor are denied the cash without which participation is impossible. They are not only relatively poorer, but they also see the good life, which requires ever more money, receding from them at an accelerating pace. This is why poverty in the midst of such wealth is experienced as violence. Labour, even under the most favourable circumstances, could begin to address only the first part of this double exclusion—and even then only if the economic climate permitted.

But there is an even darker secret shielded by Labour's historic defection from the poor since they were minoritised. This secret is that the individual enterprise of those seeking (sometimes criminal) relief from destitution is closer to Conservative philosophy, and hence more acceptable to them, than would be an organised political challenge to the right of the rich to have and to hold the excessive share of the wealth they enjoy. In other words, there is a close relationship between crime (which, in its ingenuity and resourcefulness, mimics forms of enterprise which, in another context, the Conservatives would regard as the highest endeavour) and the faltering alternatives, notably those collective hopes for the elimination of poverty once vested in the Labour Party.

If the poor exhibit a growing indifference to whoever is in power, if they say that there is nothing to choose between them and that they are all just the same, this is because they know they are condemned to a disgraced and diminished existence no matter who governs. Their only hope is to determine their own fate, even if this means rectifying, by private acts of plunder, their disadvantage and rejection.

Crime, then, is the covert, unavowed alliance between the maintenance of the existing order (or disorder) by those who are conservative in nothing, least of all in their desire to conserve even a semblance of social justice, and an opposition that has dissociated itself from any serious analysis of the roots of poverty and to which it has all but renounced efforts to formulate an alternative. Crime is an inturned and diverted radicalism, a distortion of what might once have appeared in the world as popular political dissatisfaction. It represents thwarted energies, a distorted resentment at a social landscape now almost universally regarded by politicians as an unchangeable phenomenon of nature.

That the Conservatives can denounce crime, which exists in such happy symbiosis with their own values, and then serenely promote policies that will ensure it goes on increasing, appears to offer further evidence to support their great discovery—that there is no longer any need for an opposition. A proposition to which Labour, with its decayed powers of understanding and paralysed morality, seems increasingly ready to assent. ●

"Economic factors have a major effect on trends in both property and personal crime," concludes the latest Home Office report. The police recorded 4.2 million notifiable offences in the year to July 1990, an increase of 17 per cent: burglary is up 13.6 per cent, car theft by 20.6 per cent, while "going equipped for stealing" rose by 26.4 per cent

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When the hurting has to start

Given the ropey condition of the British economy, entry into the exchange rate mechanism will be uncomfortable

Maggie Murray

We debate the ERM options facing Chancellor John Major with four leading economics editors, who warn that there will be considerable pain with the panacea. Should he or shouldn't he?

Photograph above: from left to right standing, Samuel Brittan, Will Hutton, William Keegan, and, seated, Chris Huhne

It looks as though John Major is going to take the plunge into the ERM. But should he?

William Keegan: Well, frankly, in spite of being in favour of fixed exchange rates and of ERM entry over the years, I don't think this is the right rate at which to go in. It's far too high.* It only spells trouble for the economy. Although whether it spells trouble for the government is a more delicate question. I would delay it and get interest rates down first.

Samuel Brittan: I would go in now. I would take advantage of the fact that the Prime Minister's veto seems to have been temporarily lifted. I would go in at any time that the political constellation allows and that's been my view for the past five years.

Will Hutton: I think we're all united in saying we should go in. But why seize a moment that locks in such a degree of uncompetitiveness? Going in at around 3 DM to the pound pins labour costs at a level of uncompetitiveness that IMF figures indicate is just fractionally below where such costs were right at the peak of the last recession, where everyone now agrees that the exchange rate was overvalued.

Brittan: Very frankly, I want to do it at a high rate. I want to go in very much for anti-inflationary reasons and I was worried a few months ago that we were going in at too low a rate.

Chris Huhne: I do think it's absolutely crucial to point out that we are not talking about a fixed exchange rate. I certainly would not support going into the ERM—as only the British know it; for everybody else it's the EMS (to talk about the ERM is a ludicrous bit of Treasury face-saving)—if there wasn't some limited capacity to adjust the rate. If we go in at this stage, we're going in with an underlying inflation rate that's very much higher than that of other ERM countries. I mean, on the latest figures, our underlying inflation rate, excluding mortgage interest payment, excluding community charge, is 7.9 per cent, whereas the European average is 3 per cent. Now you don't have to do many back-of-the-envelope calculations to recognise that the squeeze, which is already quite substantial in companies, is going to be substantially greater.

We should have joined in 1979 when the system began. We would have had a more durably reduced inflation rate if we had. So I agree with Sam: let's take the opportunity and get in. But let's remember that we do have a capacity, although more limited now, to adjust the exchange rate once we are in. And that means we have to be open-minded, come a year or 18 months, and be prepared to devalue and not get involved in an old-fashioned sort of fetish about the value of sterling.

Brittan: If you say out of the corner of your mouth on Day One that it's not a fixed exchange rate area and you can easily change the rate, then you needn't bother to join.

Huhne: As you know very well, what policy-makers say to each other privately is always very different to what they're prepared to put in a Mansion House speech. If you were to ask me what I would say as Chancellor going in, I would say, "We're determined to hold this rate and wage bargainers watch out!" If you asked me privately if I actually believed we should constantly hold that rate, I'd say, "Well, let's wait and see how the labour market reacts."

Hutton: Look at Pierre Beregovoy in France. Everyone thought that he was always going to devalue. And, of course, the trick is that people learnt that he wasn't going to devalue. I was deeply sceptical about whether he could actually sustain the franc inside the ERM. He has. And they've taken the long road—of severe counter-inflation with no devaluation. I think you only get the counter-inflationary gains if people credibly believe that you're going to do that. To go in and devalue in 18 months makes no sense. You have to go in, say that's the rate,

**A high exchange rate reduces the costs of imports and keeps inflation down. But it raises the costs of British goods and makes it harder to sell them overseas and at home. A low exchange rate increases import prices and inflation, but makes it easier to sell lower-priced British exports.*

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The only honest way to avoid pain is through an incomes policy, but the body politic won't allow that

—Chris Huhne

Entry will be like the great moment of the Repeal of the Corn Laws—a decisive step towards a continental economy

—Will Hutton

hold the rate, and make sure it's a sustainable rate. There's a raft of buttressing policy measures that you have to take when you go in, which includes some kind of mechanism to ensure nominal wages and credit growth in the United Kingdom grow at parallel rates with those in mainland Europe.

You all believe we should go in. Would you like to say why you think it's absolutely vital that we should go in?

Brittan: Well, let me throw down the gauntlet. I've always called myself something like a broad church, or low church, monetarist. The only way that you can keep inflation down, let alone stop it, is by the knowledge that spending power is going to be controlled and that if people award themselves too much, they will not be able to sell the goods. Now doing it through monetary targets has proved ineffective for all sorts of reasons. But centrally there is the sheer difficulty of understanding. People at a very high level became extremely muddled. One of the great virtues of the EMS is that it's the one form of monetary framework that there is a ghost of a chance of leading actors eventually understanding (a lot of emphasis on eventually). It isn't just expectations, it isn't just imagination. It is the knowledge that if costs go up faster than those of our main European competitors, there will be no mechanism to bail them out. It is a form of monetarism. It is a modern form of the Gold Standard, if you like. It's always been very puzzling to me that the left is so keen on it, that it doesn't look a gift horse in the mouth when it appears. It does seem that there is a broad political framework of support for a monetary approach to inflation, if one does it via the exchange rate and leaves the Bundesbank with the task of actually regulating domestic monetary policy severely enough.

Now, I am not a temperamental reactionary: I believe in the EMS because I don't think there is any long-term trade-off between jobs and inflation. So you might as well have low inflation. If you have low inflation, policy is not the whole time obsessed with counter-inflation: you can turn your mind to more constructive subjects. For instance, how you could most effectively relieve poverty. You probably eventually have a lower rate of unemployment. I don't want to emphasise this, because I cannot demonstrate this econometrically to Chris, although some people try!

Huhne: And fail!

Brittan: Government should control what it can most easily influence—not 100 per cent determine, because market volatility comes in... ie, the exchange rate of sterling. The sooner we can fix that, the better. The only times when inflation performance has been reasonable have been when the exchange rate has been fixed or when sterling has been what most of you regard as too high.

Huhne: You're trying to say that going into ERM is all about being a monetarist, but this is really a misuse of the word. Monetarism is a specific doctrine. Monetarism is not the same as the EMS.

One reason why left-of-centre governments clearly favour the ERM is because it demonstrates to many of their supporters, who tend to be kindly people who want to give lots of lollipops to everybody who comes into the room, that there have to be certain disciplines involved in economic policy. It does actually allow them to turn round and say, "We can't do this because of our commitment within the EMS," or whatever it happens to be. In many ways, it is more essential for a left-of-centre Chancellor of the Exchequer than it is for a right-of-centre Chancellor, because everybody expects a right-of-centre Chancellor to be a complete bastard, whereas a left-of-centre Chancellor actually has to go against the feelings within his party and hold the line.

Hutton: I'm for the exchange rate mechanism because I believe it to be counter-inflationary. I'm for the exchange rate mechanism because it will trigger much-needed reforms in the City of London and in Britain's collective bargaining system. I'm for the exchange rate mechanism because I believe it's part of a gathering process of European integration. I'm for the exchange rate mechanism for a larger reason still: which is that I believe that it will be rather like the great moment of the Repeal of the Corn Laws—it will mark a decisive step towards a continental economy, with continental-style methods of running it and, ultimately, continental-style democratic institutions. We live in a rather eccentric island. The ERM will take us into the modern world.

So I'm for it for a raft of reasons. Given how enthusiastic I am about it, to be cautious about joining at this time underlines that I don't believe, despite all that, that it's worth doing something that chops off half, or the whole, of the leg to get to the destination I want to get to. I'd just like to get to it with as much of the body economic intact as possible.

Keegan: I think that fixed exchange rates have been associated with quite close periods of growth. The floating periods, both before the war and in the 1970s and early 1980s, were not very successful. The empirical evidence suggests that the more stable framework provided by fixed (but adjustable) exchange rates—we're not talking about them being fixed for ever, at least I'm not—provide better periods of growth in investment which, in the end, allow governments to feel happy, to spend more freely and to provide a faster growth in the standard of living.

I can remember the debates towards the end of the 1970s when the British decided not to go into the ERM. One of the principal reasons was fear that, if we went in, we would lose the freedom to devalue the pound. And that was followed by the biggest overvaluation of any currency in recent history. And that was the period 1979-80. We wouldn't have had quite such an absurd overvaluation of the pound during that period if we had been within the ERM. And that was the period which sowed the seeds for an awful lot of our subsequent troubles.

Sam can poke fun at statistics, but I still think we have a serious balance of payments problem, and that we need a lower exchange rate to boost net exports, which lowers the rate of

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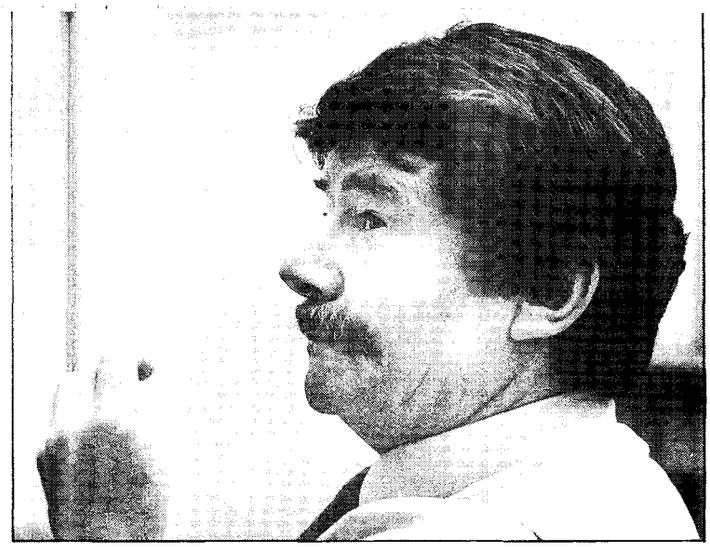
Separate currencies belong to a bygone era. The sooner national governments lose their control of monetary policy the better

—Samuel Brittan



I would advise the government to improve the trade balance and, if necessary, increase taxes

—William Keegan

growth at least a bit more; and that has to be to some extent offset by some measures to hold down purely domestic demand. And so, giving economic advice to a non-political government, I would actually be advocating action to improve the trade balance and, if necessary, tax increases. But I do know that this is not something that this government is going to contemplate in the run-up to the election.

We have just published an article by Molly Meacher, warning of severe unemployment if we join the ERM and do no more. I can see the political convenience of it, but ought not a left-of-centre, say an incoming Labour, government seek a less painful policy?

Brittan: I'm pretty sure I know why some Labour politicians are keen on the ERM. They know they have to have some influence on incomes, to use terminology with which I can be happy as well. They are very disillusioned by the workings of past incomes policies and they see entry to the ERM as a direct constraint on excessive pay increases, which doesn't involve setting norms in smoke-filled rooms. These are set by the Bundesbank. Labour politicians see it as easing their task enormously. Otherwise, if they carry on denouncing domestic monetary restraint and say they're anti-inflation, they're not going to look very convincing. So, from a purely partisan point of view, they're right.

Molly Meacher doesn't say absolutely that the ERM will cause unemployment, but that if it is not to, then it's got to be accompanied by reform of wage bargaining. The flavour of the moment in incomes policy circles is synchronised wage bargaining. Of all the things that might be tried, that is the most innocent. If people want to try synchronised wage bargaining, good luck to them! But entry into the ERM is more likely than anything else to bring about the needed changes in wage-setting, whatever they are.

Huhne: Can we get out of our present situation without pain? I think the honest answer has to be "probably not". Whatever we do, we are now in such serious straits economically, in terms of both inflation and the trade deficit, that almost any policy mix that is pursued by almost any government is going to result in pain. The real questions are: whether that pain can be limited; whether it ought to be applied gradually; and who ought to bear the brunt of it. Whether it is going to be borne, to some extent by those with the broader shoulders, through the tax system, or whether it is going to fall particularly on the unemployed, for example. And the distribution of the pain between sectors of the economy is also important.

The only honest way in which one could say we might avoid pain is through an effective incomes policy and, in my view, and I've changed my view on this, the political conditions in Britain and within the Labour Party won't allow us to run an effective incomes policy. So I'm forced to conclude, reluctantly, that our present predicament requires pain. And the only real question is how it's distributed.

Keegan: I agree with a lot of what Chris has said and I think it's very important that this debate is taking place in the *NSS*, because it might help to stop Chris from being so disillusioned about incomes policy. If people wake up to the problems that are now facing us, the climate may change. The gentle flirtations with incomes policy, via synchronised bargaining, that Molly Meacher wrote about, didn't come entirely out of the trade union movement, but it was encouraging that it was propagated by trade unions, and that it is part of Labour Party thinking as well. So something's changing, though it has got to change a lot more.

Hutton: I'm not convinced that the root of our current inflation lies in wage costs. It was demand-led. It was about consumer expenditure running ahead of disposable income. You then get led right into this core area of the de-regulated financial system, which is the most de-regulated, certainly, of any EMS member country and probably almost any country anywhere. I mean, personal debt:income ratios are the highest anywhere. This leads me on to one of the most essential adjuncts to entry into the ERM. I think the most proximate cause of the current inflation is the extraordinary growth of credit in the latter part of the 1980s, which I do think is to do with lack of any disciplines, even prudential disciplines, inside the banking system. I think to make entry work, there has to be some kind of harmonious common regulation of credit.

Huhne: Hang on. Let's be clear about this. The reality is that credit controls are merely another way of imposing pain. They are not a way of getting out of it. Credit controls are a way of restricting demand. The real question is: once you have restricted demand, what then happens in the labour market? Do you get unemployment, or not? And the only way of not getting unemployment, once you have restricted demand is if you have an incomes policy that reduces wages growth. The question is whether or not that works. I, personally, have become sceptical as to whether it works. But credit controls are not a soft option nor a way of avoiding wage restraint or unemployment—although I entirely agree with you that we need an array of instruments to control demand. It would have been extremely useful to have credit controls through the late 1980s. But they wouldn't help us to get out of our particular problem today.

Hutton: Pain. Chris is right. There will be pain, and the issue is how it is distributed. You can do something to minimise the pain and you can do something to distribute the pain equitably. But given where we are, given the scale of inflation, it cannot be done painlessly.

And do you agree with Chris that an incomes policy might be the best solution, but that Labour politics, indeed the body politic, doesn't allow it?

Hutton: No, I'm not an incomes policy man. I think there might be a case in terms of shock therapy for a wage freeze. I do have slightly more optimism about some reforms to the British collective bargaining process but I don't believe that an incomes policy is necessarily

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politically possible and I'm not altogether convinced that 18 months into it would produce the economic gains that are wanted. I think it's pain.

Brittan: May I enter a dissent on pain. Pain comes from the British public school system and Anglo-Saxon sado-masochism, and let's not revel in it. I think much less pain is necessary than people suppose. When we had in 1988 an increasing current account deficit, then even I thought you had to curb consumption. We now have a current account deficit of the kind the Americans have financed for many years, if it exists at all. But we now have something that is quite financeable. On the question of debt: income ratios, these are matters that people must decide for themselves. If they have been too indulgent, they will have to inflict their own restraint on themselves. This is not a matter of government policy.

Second, I don't think that the past 11 years have been wasted. There have been lots of mistakes. The liberalisation measures have been desirable. My main criticism is that they haven't gone far enough; and, clearly, they haven't gone far enough in areas, such as housing and land, where they might irritate Tory supporters or the newer Labour supporters.

Now what does all this add up to in terms of the pre-election period? Can John Major avoid too much pain or must he rely on Anglo-Saxon sado-masochism?

Huhne: If I actually examine the interests of the government in the run-up to the general election, I can construct a number of scenarios that don't look at all happy for the Tories if they do join the ERM, including one where they go in and the markets don't find the exchange rate is sustainable and they therefore aren't able to reduce interest rates and deliver the golden scenario for bribing the electorate. So, on a purely analytical basis, I can see quite strong reasons why Mrs Thatcher's past reluctance to join may well re-surface.

The second question is, whether we do or don't go in; can they pull off the trick of reducing interest rates by enough to get mortgage rates down by enough to deliver an overall Tory majority? And I would have thought that the answer to that has to be, on balance still, despite the opinion polls and Labour's lead, yes. But I have to say that my judgment that the economy will come just right enough to allow them to win again arises more from the nature of the Tories' lead within parliament, and the size of the swing necessary to eliminate their majority, rather than on confidence that they are going to be able to deliver anything resembling a good old-fashioned pre-election boom. I don't think they can this time. It's going to be a moderation of pain, a pause in our longer adjustment process, which will have to be resumed by whichever government is elected.

Keegan: I think the politics of this are terrifyingly simple. They cannot admit that there is a need for "pain" or "adjustment". They cannot really admit that they have failed. They want to go into the next election with a lower inflation rate. They have got more chance of achieving that by making their main target lower interest rates. I think that Mr Major would lose all his credibility—and he hasn't been in office long enough to acquire very much—if he changes his mind on the ERM. So I would have thought that the politics were for him to encourage a period of uncertainty during which the exchange rate comes down, while protesting all way that he wants a stronger one and then putting the pound in by December, but at a level where the markets will think, "Ah, this is reasonably stable", and then we will be allowed to reduce interest rates next year.

Brittan: I prefer describing to predicting. There are two reasons why John Major hasn't joined aready. One is fear of turbulence resulting from the Middle East, the other is fear of turbulence from the lately announced 10.6 per cent RPI figure. I cannot see the Prime Minister allowing British membership when there is a war in the Middle East. I am very worried indeed about this. If there is going to be turbulence in the Gulf, we will need all the more some mechanism to prevent both overshooting and undershooting. In troubled times, we need the mechanism more rather than less.

Now the second question is, "Why should this appeal to the government?" We are already in a recession. The national income forecasting models are always late in recording this. Pretty soon, the government will be desperate to bring down interest rates. It will be difficult to bring down rates much, even in the ERM; outside the ERM it will be horrendously risky, and that is a sufficient British domestic political reason for entry. Now this isn't the golden scenario; it doesn't mean that the government is going to be able to have a massive reduction in interest rates, massive tax cuts and so on. I don't think it will manage that at all. But it will not even be able to reduce interest rates to the extent that the mainstream economists think desirable.

Hutton: That actually may be the best case for it. As for the Labour Party, there is no mileage for it in arguing that we should join at a lower rate. It would be labelled once again as a party of devaluation. It should talk more about the reforms to the credit markets, and in the labour market, that it would like to see, to make this work with less pain—which it has not done that much so far. And I think it probably needs to say that it is for European monetary union beyond the ERM.

When you look at John Major's 12 months in office, he has given much more thought to his hard Ecu plan than almost anything else. It is really his single initiative as Chancellor, and for two reasons. One, because of the explosiveness of Europe and monetary union within the Conservative Party. It's very important for it to have something that slows down European integration in the run-up to the election, but also allows it to say we're European in the same breath. It looks as though he may be pulling off the important trick for his party. But Europe is still potentially highly divisive for the Conservatives, and Labour has to play on this. Like Harold Wilson's white-hot heat of the technological revolution, it is the emblem of modernisation, acceptability, moderation. The ERM, and, beyond that, EMU, are things that they have to signal they are for.

What about the European perspective in the round? Where does the ERM and monetary union take this country?

Brittan: We need a dose of liberal or perhaps socialist internationalism. Separate currencies belong to a bygone era. The sooner national governments lose their control of monetary policy, the better. Some worry that Germany is going to dominate Europe. My own worry is that, if anything, Germay won't have enough influence on the economic side. The Bundesbank has very wisely devised a constitution for the new European Central Bank that aims to keep governments at arm's length. Wise voters will wish to keep governments away from money, just as they wish to keep them away from the judicial process.

Huhne: It is right to be in favour of a single currency because it is going to be better for trade. It is right to be in favour of a single currency because it will mean that, once we do get our inflation down, we will be able to keep it down, and keep it down without the sort of costs that have been associated with the cycles we have had to endure recently.

Perhaps most important of all, it's right to have a single currency because it will remove uncertainty and increase the likelihood of another investment boom, rather similar to the investment boom that has gone on in Europe as a result of the liberalisation move towards 1992. Britain can expect to gain disproportionately from that investment boom, precisely as we are gaining disproportionately from inwards direct investment from Japan and the United States, partly for linguistic reasons, partly because (in the Japanese case) we have better golf courses.

Keegan: Well, it is clear that the political momentum for economic and monetary integration is stronger than it has been at any time in our lives, that the monetary force has started. I am more or less convinced this is for real. I have a slight worry that it is going to slow down. As far as I can see, the President of the Bundesbank is himself sceptical that politicians in the end are going to give up all that sovereignty. His blueprint for a European Central Bank and monetary system is designed to stretch them to the limits. So far, they seem to be accepting it. I still rather wonder whether they will accept all this in the end.

The key thing that we have got to worry about is that we get our economy into shape so that we can actually participate properly. If we don't get our inflation down, make ourselves competitive and go into the single currency, we have big problems coming on the unemployment front and on the rundown of the regions. The whole country could become a declining region of Europe.

Hutton: Well, yes. I'm for the ERM, I'm for European monetary union, I'm for an independent European Central Bank, I'm for a single currency. Either they will induce a market-led way, as Sam hopes, or they will lead to proactive government, as I hope, or some combination of both, to produce those institutions that Britain needs to be a European, competitive, industrial democracy in the next century. ●

Samuel Brittan is an assistant editor on the Financial Times. *Chris Huhne is economics and assistant editor at the* Independent on Sunday. *Will Hutton is economics editor of the* Guardian. *William Keegan is economics editor of the* Observer.

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F R E E

with NSS 19th October

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LETTERS

Imperialist language

"Tribe" is a word that enters any conversation carrying two large suitcases. Each is stuffed full of the imagery of colonialism and imperialism. Although today this term is used less and less in polite conversation, in the wake of fighting in South Africa and Liberia, "tribe" appears to be making something of a comeback.

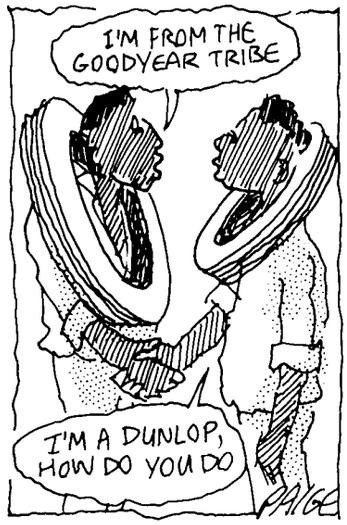
Recently, several otherwise quite sensible British journalists have referred to "tribalism" as a political factor in both Monrovia and the apartheid republic. Meanwhile, television news pictures of dancing Zulus have reinforced a rather weary idea of Africa as a Hentyesque environment which only the good offices of Europeans could ever put right.

Of course, in South Africa the concept of tribe is a central pillar of apartheid. The more sophisticated members of F W de Klerk's National Party long ago realised the value of a Balkanised opposition—particularly for the control of any future South African democracy. Divide and rule.

Present South African practice enjoys considerable historical antecedent elsewhere in Africa. The stamping out of supposed "tribal" rivalries was a popular Franco-British pastime during the nineteenth century, frequently resulting in the transfer of African wealth to Europe. In the past, the enslavement of African (and American) populations was palatable largely because white people considered their victims to be primitive. To be designated a "tribe" by Europeans rendered any black community a potential target for invasion (and, occasionally, extermination).

What constitutes a tribe defies precise definition; but as this word is generally used, it essentially means the social unit of anybody black living in Africa. Further distinctions of size (there are, for example, around 30 million Nigerian Yoruba), language, music or cuisine are meaningless. Naturally, no serious British journalist would ever call the Scots or Welsh a tribe! And while, to Africans, Azerbaijan and Heysel Stadium might seem clear examples of "tribal conflict", they fail to fulfil the central racial requirement of the term. In being selectively applied to black people, tribe reveals its special pejorative quality.

Perhaps, eventually, "tribe" will pack its bags and leave the English language for good. Sadly, until it



does, the spectre of colonialism will continue to pervade British news coverage of Africa, rendering every disagreement on that continent a potential "tribal flashpoint".

E Dwumah
Thornaugh Street
London WC1

The Lady in the Van

Readers who saw Sean French's reference to Alan Bennett's "brilliant recent memoir of a female vagrant who lived in a caravan in his front garden" ("Writing and action", 21 September) might like to know that *The Lady in the Van* is published in paperback by the *London Review of Books* at £3.50, and can be bought or ordered from any bookshop.

Mary-Kay Wilmers
London Review of Books
Tavistock House South
Tavistock Square
London WC1

Facts and figures

Lucasta Miller ("Novel impressions", 21 September) attributes to me a belief in "the death of the novel and the rise of the biography as the genre of the 21st century"—a sentiment, she adds, of "extravagant self-interest". I can assure her that I hold no such belief and have made no such prediction. Indeed, I see biography as an attempt to get a little beyond self-interest.

In the same issue, Sarah Baxter ("The Carmen touch") writes that Chatto & Windus "notoriously" advanced me £625,000 for my biography of Bernard Shaw. I have not received £625,000 from Chatto. I have not even received £525,000, or again, £425,000. By the year 1993, I hope to have earned half the notorious sum. It is true, however, that the biography does contain some 625,000 words. Perhaps interest could be switched now from the figures to the words.

Michael Holroyd
St Marks Road
London W10

The Big Idea

Anthony Wright argues that Labour needs a "Big Idea" if it is to win the next election ("Out of vision", 14 September). But given Kinnock's success in turning the party round, others will ask, "Why risk changing a winning formula?"

The point must surely be that mid-term leads, even commanding ones, can vanish like snow in winter as government election-fixing comes into play. This ditched Gaitskell after the mid-term leads of the 1955-59 parliament, came close to ditching Wilson at the 1964 election, made 1970 a close-run prospect, and, with the aid of internal strife, destroyed Labour's chances of winning in 1983, despite huge poll leads in 1981.

The Labour leadership seems to dismiss these arguments on the grounds that the economy is in such dire straits that the Tories cannot recover. Even before the Gulf crisis, this was a weak argument; the polls consistently show more faith in the Tories' ability to handle the economy, and, unless a recession takes place, they may be able to stage a pre-election boom sufficient to turn the tables on Labour.

Labour should not wish for, or rely on, a recession. In this context, the arguments for a "Big Idea" have some relevance, but hardly on the narrow constitutional lines proposed by Charter 88, which have little popular support. So why not revive the old cry of "modernisation"? Britain is without doubt an archaic society. Modernisation can strike a chord in many potential Labour voters, uneasily aware that compared to other advanced industrial societies, in Europe and further afield, Britain is becoming a backward society.

One obvious drawback of advancing modernisation is, of course, the Wilson legacy. Harold Wilson fought the 1964 and 1966 elections on the platform of modernisation, and failed disastrously. If Labour has any sense, it will stop trying to sweep the failures of the Wilson years under the carpet and try to learn from them.

Trevor Fisher
Lovatt Gardens
Stafford

Age of Enlightenment

On behalf of Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation organisation, we would like to make some comments about Duncan Campbell's misleading and superficial article, "Heaven on earth", (28 September).

In presenting his viewpoint, he gave no real consideration to the three things that have most strongly motivated the expansion of the organisation: the personal experience of the development of consciousness and better health through TM—now learned by three million people worldwide; the validation of this experience by independent research in numerous countries; and its further confirmation by the ancient scientific record of the full range of natural law available in the Vedic texts, such as those of Ayur Ved.

We would also like to bring the following facts to the attention of readers:

1. Over the past 20 years, 430 scientific studies have confirmed the benefits of TM. The majority of these studies have been conducted by researchers at independent universities and institutions, and a large number published in leading, peer-reviewed, scientific journals. (It is hardly complimentary to other journalists for Mr Campbell to call them gullible for giving credence to this research.)

2. In Britain, the organisation teaching TM is a registered educational charity and certainly not a "cult". The accounts are audited by the prominent firm Coopers and Lybrand and properly lodged with the Charity Commissioners.

3. The statement that people "have cracked up" through TM is completely baseless. In fact, a very extensive Swedish government study not only concluded that TM was not a risk factor for mental illness, but also indicated that TM practitioners were 150-200 times

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less likely to need admission for psychiatric care than the rest of the population.

Editorial constraints do not allow us to respond in more detail to the other inaccuracies in Mr Campbell's article but we would be happy to provide further information to anyone who is interested.

For 33 years, Maharishi's global organisation has been dedicated to promoting peace, prosperity, and progress for the people of all nations. It is too late now for any unbalanced reporting to harm its growth. We invite anyone to learn TM or any aspect of Maharishi's Vedic Science and verify the reality for themselves.

Peter Warburton
Minister of Information and Inspiration
World Government of the Age of Enlightenment
Mentmore
Bucks

The best years of their lives

In our issue of 21 September, "The best years of their lives" was attributed to Alexander Cockburn alone. JoAnn Wypijewski should have been given joint credit with him.

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● It was, however, a materially deprived childhood and [John] Major was sent to school in second-hand blazers. This humiliation perhaps contributed to his growing resentment against his teachers. Before long he became a rebel.—*Observer* (Peter Walton)

● Stubbins, 25, threw paint stripper over her and set her alight after a row at their home in Pocklington, near York.

Mother-of-three Lesley was on a life support machine for two weeks after the attack. She spent another 11 weeks in hospital.

But she plans to visit Stubbins in prison: "It's selfish but I wonder if he's going to hate me. I don't want him to remember me the way I was that night."

She also admitted that Stubbins often beat her up but she added: "He always cleaned me up afterwards or took me to hospital or bought me presents... He showed me how to love somebody."—*Northern Echo* (Lynne Strutt)

FRINGE BENEFITS

Outsiders

Colin Ward

Round our way, where every other shop in the local high streets seems to be an estate agency, we have dozens of houses for sale. And just as we used to tut-tut a few years ago about the astronomical prices being asked for houses, so today we tut-tut about how little they have gone down, in spite of the alleged collapse of the property boom.

Everyone on the inside, willingly or not, is part of a conspiracy to make it impossible for those on the outside to burst the bubble, and get a roof over *their* heads. These outsiders paradoxically tend to belong to families local for generations, who simply aren't rich enough to buy their way into the housing market. They figure in two reports just out. The first gives the findings of a survey by Action with Communities in Rural England on *Tackling Deprivation in Rural Areas; Effective Use of Charity Funding* (£6 from ACRE, Stroud Road, Cirencester GL7 6JR), which lists 14 kinds of deprivation that are a feature of some people's lives in most country areas, not just in remote places.

Apart from the lack of affordable housing, there is the lack of access to public transport, of local services and facilities (and the high cost of those that do exist), coupled with low incomes and lack of job opportunities and of control over resources. A similar list comes from the report of the Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas, *Faith in the Countryside* (Churchman Publishing, £12.50). Its 48 recommendations to government include the removal of restrictions on the use of local authorities' income from house sales for new social housing, and an increase in the Housing Corporation's investment in rural housing associations. Its 100 recommendations to the Church include making its own land available for low-cost housing rather than selling it to the highest bidder.

People may start housing associations and then learn that the Housing Corporation has run out of funds and the building societies have lost interest. At Haverhill in Suffolk, a group chose the sensible option of self-build on a council-owned site, only to learn that the self-build management company involved had gone into liquidation. It explained to the council that, "we were unable to meet our immediate commitments due to one of our funding building societies defaulting."

One category of rural people who make no demands for special treatment ought to be the lucky ones—those whom family history has given access to a patch of land. Only planning policy stands in their way. Policy is based on a few propositions that may not be queried. One is that the rural landscape should remain as it was in 1948—apart from large-scale destruction by farmers and the building of roads. Another is that those "precious agricultural acres" are holy, even if the bottom has fallen out of the market. A third is that any new housing should be extension or infill of existing villages. A fourth is that any proposed new house elsewhere has to be lied about so that it appears to be the home of one of that dying breed, the agricultural worker. A fifth, unspoken, policy is that if you are rich enough, you can get away with anything.

Where I live, there are several families whose names go back in local records for 200 years. Peter is a farmer's son in Ruth Rendell's village who is getting married and wants to build a house on the farm, as property round here is far beyond their means. The house "would not be obtrusive, but a bungalow set near his parents' home and the ancient farm". Despite the united suppport of the parish council, his application was turned down.

Tom (a distant relation of Peter) has lived all his life in our parish. He and his wife have raised seven children in the family house and wanted to have a smaller retirement home on their own adjacent land so that one of their children's families could move into their house. The parish council observed that it "warmly supports this application". Planning permission was refused, "in that the site is situated in the countryside", and because the proposed dwelling "represents the undesirable addition to the sporadic residential development in the countryside which, if permitted, would be to the detriment of the character of the area".

Now this hamlet has always been a nucleus of settlement, reinforced in the 1960s, '70s and '80s by completely new or rebuilt and extended houses. No precedents would be set. So an appeal was made to the secretary of state. It failed, as the inspector was "satisfied that notwithstanding a scatter of dwellings in the vicinity, the appeal site lies within predominantly rural surroundings".

So neither young Peter nor old Tom can build a house, even though they don't have to face the cost of acquiring the land. Meanwhile, in both these local parishes, there are half a dozen houses offered for sale at six times the price it would cost *them* to build.

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The corks have popped

Denis Stanton reports from Berlin on the search for a new German identity

Michael Sheehy

At the centre of the huge Bismarck exhibition currently running in Berlin, is a gallery devoted to "Images from the German Search for Identity", which includes a series of representations of Germania as a fierce-looking female figure sitting on a rock and protecting the Fatherland from all comers. An appropriate image for Berlin immediately after unification might be Germania surrounded by suitcases and cardboard boxes. Over the past year, the city has received hundreds of thousands of immigrants from all over eastern Europe, and they are to be seen at the railway stations and on street corners at all hours of the day and night, with everything they own crammed into a few suitcases and a couple of boxes.

The celebrations marking the day of German unity have provided an opportunity for a reminder of the events of last autumn—the exodus from East Germany through Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and the demonstrations in Leipzig and Berlin that led to the opening up of the Berlin Wall on 9 November. The people who streamed through the openings in the wall that night were greeted by their neighbours in West Berlin with champagne, tears and kisses, and the city rejoiced at the prospect of coming together again. Last week, however, many of the West Berliners who were most enthusiastically popping the corks less than a year ago were threatening to celebrate the unification of Germany by pelting passing East German cars with empty bottles.

The effects of the rush to unity have been felt more keenly here than anywhere else in Germany, and West Berliners are increasingly impatient with the growing traffic, the rising crime rate, pollution, and the sheer inconvenience of expanding overnight from an orderly city of two million people into a metropolis with four or five million, half of whom have no experience of living in a capitalist democracy. East Germans are widely characterised as idle, greedy and feckless, expecting a western standard of living immediately without being prepared to work for it; and sympathy for their experience of living under a dictatorship is evaporating. More significantly, there is an assumption in the west that there is nothing to be learnt from that experience of tyranny, and East Germans who wish to succeed are advised simply to study western ways and follow suit. For the people of the east coping with the threat of mass unemployment, rising prices, stubbornly low wages and, above all, profound uncertainty about the future, the next year will not be an easy one.

Those involved in the arts are scarcely immune to this uncertainty; indeed, they have specific problems of their own. According to Torsten Maas, director of the Berliner Festwochen—a festival of music and theatre held in West Berlin every September—and the organiser of the cultural programme for the unity celebrations, the East German theatre has a particularly important role in society. A kind of subtext had developed between the actors and the audience and, through this, information was conveyed which could not be found on television or in the newspapers. Indeed, the satirical cabaret on East Berlin's Friedrichstrasse had been lampooning the country's leading politician with

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ever-increasing brazenness for a number of years. Now that papers can publish what they wish, the theatre has been robbed of its role, and Maas is alarmed by the number of East German writers and directors who are in a state of shock, quite simply not knowing what to do.

The big theatres in West Berlin are untroubled by such questions of identity; indeed, Peter Stein has declared that the Schaubuehne will continue to operate in exactly the same way as it did before unification. The question of funding will be a crucial one and nobody is yet certain how it will be resolved.

The arts in West Berlin have traditionally been very well subsidised, with billions of Deutschmarks poured in from West Germany every year to enhance the city's status during the time when it seemed to be an unattractive place to live in. Cultural life in East Berlin has been well funded too, partly at the expense of other East German cities, and Torsten Maas is confident that the arts will continue to be well provided for. Indeed, he predicts that, within a few years, Berlin will regain the status of a major European cultural centre which it enjoyed during the 1920s.

Theatre critic Joachim Preuss is also confident about the long-term prospects for the arts in Berlin, but he fears that the immediate consequence of unification will be to put pressure on small theatres—such as the excellent Maxim Gorky Theatre in East Berlin—to modify their programmes.

There is already evidence that the public in East Berlin is more interested in entertainment and an escape from the anxieties of daily life than in social comment. *A Night at the Cotton Club*, a song-and-dance extravaganza based on the music of Duke Ellington, which comes to Berlin at the end of this month, will open in an East Berlin Theatre, the Metropol, and the British comedy series *Fawlty Towers*, shown on East German TV for the first time recently, has already built up a huge following. Preuss expects Berlin's 30 theatres to increase to 40 over the next few years, but the new houses will not, he predicts, be devoted to literary theatre; they will offer entertainment.

In the meantime, Berlin is being exposed to so many new influences and is changing so fast that even the self-satisfied cultural establishment of West Berlin cannot remain unaffected indefinitely. In the east, as greater numbers lose their jobs and western investment is slow to materialise, the growing frustration of a people hectored and humiliated by their rich neighbours may provide artists with a new role more quickly than they could have expected. If they do not rise to the challenge, this frustration may find other ways of articulating itself and they may be a good deal less palatable.

At the Bismarck exhibition, one of the most popular exhibits is Anton von Werner's painting of the Kaiser's Proclamation at Versailles in 1871—the last time Germany was unified. On that occasion, Prince Otto of Bavaria wrote to his brother that "everything was so cold, so proud, so glittering, so showy and swaggering and heartless and empty". To many in Berlin this week, the sentiments may have been familiar.

Television

The haunted heart

Cairns Craig on John Byrne's new drama

In long draped coat, with brilliantined quiff and sideburns, a small-time gangster stands at the door of a bathroom in a house he has broken into—and sings into its echo-chamber:

"Since ma-a babi left me/I found a new place to dwe-ell/It's uh-down the end of-a lonely street/Called h-h-h-heartbreak hotel..."

The characters of John Byrne's new series, **Your Cheatin' Heart** (BBC1, Thursdays at 10pm), haunt modern Scotland like ghosts from another world: in hairstyle, dress and music, they live with an absurd intensity in some other time and through someone else's identity. In Byrne's previous series, *Tutti Frutti*, it was Danny (Robbie Coltrane) who was haunted, acting out the part of his dead brother, who was in turn mimicking the lifestyle of an American rock'n'roll singer. In the new series, we are in a world where country and western has become the authentic culture of the west—the west of Scotland.

The disjunction supports the play of misunderstandings that is Byrne's forte: the simplest spoken sentence is always, for Byrne, subject to creative misinterpretation by its recipient, and much of his wit lies in the verbal slapstick of mislocated clauses and the visual puns of colliding styles and settings. But what underlies the laughter is the terror of individual identities that have been constructed from nothing more than film and pop music clichés, identities that are pure fiction—the heartbreak of having no secure place to dwell.

We can read this in terms of a passive "postmodern" perception that the world is no more than a collage of surface styles; or as the consequence of the hegemony of American cultural stereotypes in the period that obsesses Byrne's imagination, the fifties and sixties. But Byrne is able to present these disjunctions so effectively in a Scottish context because past Scottish culture, through most of this century, *was* presented as a fiction—kilts and Highland hills and couthy country villages—a place abutting absurdly against the reality of working-class people packed into one of the most concentrated and heavily industrialised centres in Europe. Scottish "identity" had become an empty space between the shortbread-tin-picture of purple hills and the blackened tenements or barren schemes of the industrial towns.

To a generation of Scottish writers and filmmakers in the fifties and sixties, that surreal disjunction was a terrible barrier. What they felt, looking at Scottish experience, was (as the main character in *Your Cheatin' Heart* puts it) "like I've landed on Mars and left my Baedeker in my other boiler suit". A folk who imagined themselves through the forms of a Highland culture they had destroyed, or through poor-white American music, could not be authentic material for a realistic Scottish art. Silence or exile were the only options.

But Byrne achieves an entirely opposite tra-

John Gordon-Sinclair and Tilda Swinton in "Your Cheatin' Heart"

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jectory: the more haunted his characters are by the ghosts of elsewheres, the more surely do they announce the uniqueness of their present place; the more obscure their adoption of a disguise from another time, the more clearly we hear the accents of their real voice.

This double movement is an essential expression of contemporary Scottish culture: because Scotland has been force-fed the dominant powers' cultural values, because it has been imperialised and has committed linguacide, it can have no one tradition, no one "centre" from which to assert its identity, no heart that hasn't been cheated into, and back out of, the Highlands (or America). And yet, it is in the local dialogue of these alien things that its unique contemporary creativity is generated.

Scotland is, in effect, like all those other parts of Europe emerging slowly from the obliterating flood of the old nation-states of the west and the empire of the east.

These "nationalisms" may be operating within the boundaries of an older nationalism, but they are new creations, necessarily a dialogue between layers of imposed or remembered or adopted cultural meanings, between the universal languages of popular commercialism and the local memory of other forms of expression. It is out of that *dialogue* that the "identities" of the reborn nations emerge—in the misunderstandings and gaffs and absurdities; in the tragic joke of a Scottish gangster who knows that if *Heartbreak Hotel* is his only culture, then he is down and out at the end of a lonely street, but that without it, he has no place to call his own.

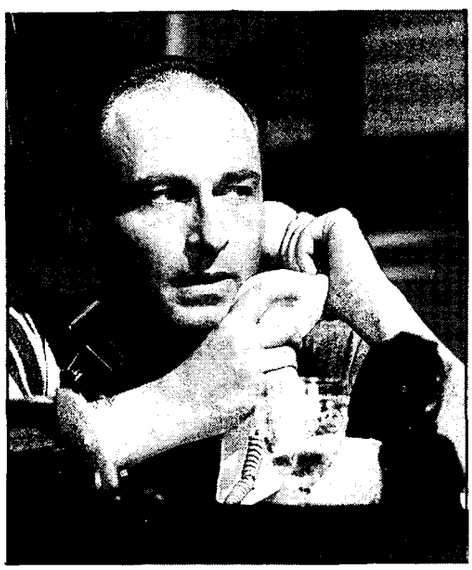
Theatre

Alternative America

Andrew Pulver profiles the exciting New York Wooster Group

New York's **Wooster Group** is not named out of any arcane affiliation with P G Wodehouse: Wooster is, in fact, the name of the street in SoHo where its theatre-space, the Performance Garage, is located.

All the group's work—archetypally avant-garde, embodying the best tradition of American aesthetic radicalism—is developed and first performed in this tiny, claustrophobic environment; it will have to adapt to the huge, industrial-scale spaces of Glasgow's Tramway Theatre for **Brace Up!**, its first British performance since presenting *LSD...(Just The High Points)* at the 1987 Edinburgh Festival.



Constituted in its present form in 1980, the group can boast some of the highest-calibre stage performers in America today. Willem Dafoe and Ron Vawter, along with Kate Valk and Peyton Smith, form the central acting personnel; the nucleus of the group, however, is the intense vision and searing intellect of director Liz LeCompte. Teaming up with Spalding Gray in the early 1970s, the two turned against Schechner's idiosyncratic and ritualistic style to develop their own work. Beginning with *Sakonnet Point* in 1974, their *Rhode Island Trilogy* was built around Gray's recollections, from childhood nostalgia to his mother's suicide.

By the time Schechner decided to leave the group in 1980, artistic control was effectively out of his hands. The new Wooster Group's first production was the first instalment of a second trilogy, *The Road To Immortality*, called *Route 1 and 9*.

The trilogy established the Wooster Group's reputation as performers of stunning imaginative power, combined with a rigorously radical perspective that allowed little compromise. LeCompte remained influenced by the essentials of Schechner's medium: the fragmentation and juxtaposition of texts and forms drawn from all corners of American culture, and the importance of improvisation as a mediator with the details of personal experience. But LeCompte transformed Schechner's guru-oriented socialising experiences into an act of sociocultural analysis, and, in the process, aroused the deepest admiration as well as the most hostile controversy. LeCompte's images are extracted from deep in the American imagination, handling the junk by-products of American dreams.

Route 1 and 9 is typical: a section of the American highway network in New Jersey. Here two freeways converge to form a 30-mile corridor of emblematically American landscape—an image fused by the group with scenes from Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, itself a paean to the ideals of white middle-America. Alongside this are placed adaptations of Pigmeat Markham routines, a star of the black vaudeville/minstrel circuit before and after the second world war.

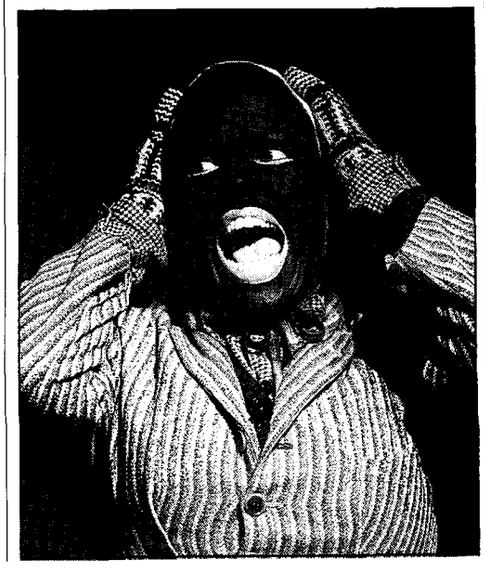
In its exploration of the gulf between black and white cultures, *Route 1 and 9* initiated some genuinely radical moments of performance. This included the "live" ordering of takeaway food from Harlem concerns, all of which regularly refused to undertake deliveries to downtown SoHo. But the company's use of "blackface"—minstrel-style face-paint—caused accusations of racism and resulted in a 40 per cent funding cut by the New York State Council of the Arts. LeCompte's defence was strenuous, pointing out that the piece was designed to expose the lack of communication and relentless stereotyping in the white world.

An even bigger storm broke over the group's next piece, the second part of Road trilogy. *LSD* took as its starting-point the recollections of Anne Rower, Dr Timothy Leary's babysitter while he was at Harvard developing his acid-based hippy philosophy. Against this, and readings from other sixties writers, the group set passages (...just the high points) of Arthur Miller's classic of confrontational morality, *The Crucible*. Miller refused copyright, claiming the group's work amounted to a parody. Ironically, Miller took on the repressive stance of the values he denounced in Eisenhower's America: yet the group's performance remained an astonishing and powerful examination of two decades of American culture.

What *Brace Up!* has in store, heaven only knows. LeCompte has grudgingly admitted that cut-ups from Chekhov's *Three Sisters* will be used, along with bits from Kabuki and Japanese samurai movies. Apart from that, expect the unflinching bravery of all the Wooster Group's work, the radical confrontation with history and society, the same self-willed readiness to pursue theatrical logic to the end.

From its beginnings in the depths of the American underground, the group is claiming the international recognition that is its due. It is high time that it gained, in Britain, the respect it deserves.

Brace Up! *will be at the Tramway Theatre, Glasgow, until 21 October*



Wooster Group's attempt to expose stereotyping (right) led to a cut in funding

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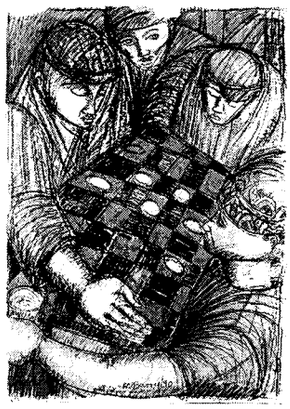

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Film

Distinctly dystopian

Forget utopia. Suzanne Moore on other visions of the future

Nothing frightens us anymore. Least of all horror movies. Or so it would seem, because the scariness quotient of horror movies is now one of the least important factors. Instead, we talk in terms of consistency of internal mythology, bravura special effects and taboo-busting. We have seen it all before, and the contemporary horror film knows we've seen it all before. It is, as film critic Philip Brophy said, the "cheapest trick in the book" that makes your muscles tense up. Not that any of these thrills are so cheap these days.

This is certainly true of Clive Barker's **Nightbreed**. For, despite a plethora of prosthetics and a whole community of monsters, nothing is more purely nerve-jangling than the simple stalk-and-slash antics of a man, a mask and a meat cleaver in a suburban kitchen. But then, hearing Barker, who made the phenomenally successful *Hellraiser*, talk about his work, has always struck me as far more interesting than the films themselves.

The S&M undertones of *Hellraiser* have given way here to a celebration of otherness or deviancy that is so explicit as to be unexciting. Mashing together a monster-movie plot with a fairly standard slasher story has its moments, but both get lost in a finale of big-budget explosions. The clean-cut hero of *Nightbreed* is Boone, an average American guy, except that he believes he is a psycho killer and has recurring nightmares about a place called Midian. The reason he takes himself to be a mass murderer is that his shrink, the deadly Dr Decker, has persuaded him this is the case. Because, of course, it is Decker who is the killer.

Boone nevertheless escapes custody and death and finds that Midian does exist. The underworld here is literally underground in a graveyard in Alberta, and it is peopled by the Nightbreed, grotesque monsters who have remained hidden from history. But these monstrous beings are not nearly as monstrous as the red-neck police force chasing Boone or, indeed, Decker himself. Somewhere along the way, a priest gets involved in the action, just adding to the number of hanging plots. The moral seems to be, "looks aren't everything", though Barker has talked grandly of models of physical change as metaphors for psychic change. It's all rather disappointing, except for the dapper David Cronenberg as Decker (get him on the front of *GQ*). It's almost worth the admission price alone to see this suave gore-merchant don a Buttonhead rapist mask and whisper "I am death" as he tortures an old man.

Yet Barker's fashionable exploration of difference and desire or difference as desire —Barker's mutants are always fully sexual beings—is at odds with the demands of the teen horror flick. While he may be trying to get away from any kind of good-conquers-evil conclusions, he merely redraws the definitions of what is good and what is evil. Still, any mainstream film-maker who promotes unnatural practices is something to be thankful for.

Nothing in Barker's community of monsters in "Nightbreed" frightens us anymore

If Barker's preoccupations primarily concern the software of the human body, it is Cronenberg himself who has best exploited the interface between software and hardware in *Videodrome*. And Richard Stanley's first film, **Hardware,** reminds us of a whole different sci-fi genre based on a mixture of fear of, and fascination with, technology. Made for an incredible £1 million, the kind of money Arnie would earn on an off-day, *Hardware* exhibits a healthy cynicism and a nice line in technophobia.

Set in a future in which the Green Party has clearly had little success, Mo returns home. Home is a dystopian scrapyard of salvage culture, eco-disaster, uncontrollable pollution alongside fascistic population control. From *Blade Runner* to *Mad Max* and the prerequisite Oriental influence, this is a familiar landscape—*Apocalypse Now* has already happened and it wasn't such a big deal.

Mo trudges over to his girlfriend Jill's flat with a little present—a cyborg head he has picked up. Jill is delighted, as she is a sculptress making mutoid waste-type structures Anyway, the cyborg gets itself together again and starts going mad in her flat: "There's a droid running crazy in my living room." And that's about it. Except Jill gets to be very physical in an *Alien*-type way, and there are lots of witty touches that make you forget the limited locations.

Hardware is a film made by, and for, a post-punk generation that grew up reading comics, listening to heavy metal and goofing off. It wears its subcultural influences on its sleeve, which make it hugely enjoyable and a damn sight more "in touch" than a movie like *Batman* could ever be. Lemmy is a taxi driver, Iggy Pop is a DJ, Angry Bob, Public Image Ltd play on the soundtrack and lynx-eyed heroine Stacey Travis looks like a comic-strip drawing of Catwoman.

What's exciting about it is that it brings together these influences not into any kind of coherent theme which would instantly destroy them but in the messily vivid way that they are lived. So we have drugs, metal, noise, eastern mysticism, fractal geometry, biblical prophesies, telepathy, artificial intelligence, cable porn, media overload all banged up against each other in Mo's death scene. It doesn't make sense, but that's the whole point. Indeed, one of the jokes of *Hardware* is that Mo's best friend, Shades, has just taken some "Moonflash" and is so out of his head that he is unable to rescue anyone.

Any cyberpunk musings lose out in the end to a straight man (or in this case woman against machine), tech noir battle, but the action is as good as any you get in films made for 20 times the money. *Hardware* also provides more evidence that, as postmodern theorist Fred Jameson has argued, we are able only to imagine dystopian rather than utopian visions of the future. But why is this such a bad thing? The attitude in *Hardware* is one of resignation—the world is fucked up, and we can do nothing to change it. Left pessimism tells us that we can no longer imagine any kind of collective or political strategy that will make the future any different, yet it dismisses the attempts that individuals make to change the Here and Now.

As the recent articles on the future in this magazine confirm, the official analysts of political culture resolutely ignore the utopian elements of so much popular culture which are present in both these films. They pretend that there is a clear-cut choice between mysticism and materialism, hedonism and history, and they want their definition of collectivity tightly controlled. I can't imagine anything more purely dystopian than that.

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Art

Dreams are made of this

Sue Hubbard on the junk-culture world of Edward Ruscha

America, claims the postmodernist French philosopher Baudrillard, is "the only remaining primitive society". For it is "neither dream nor reality", but a hyper-real utopia, the stuff that dreams are made of. Americans, he continues, have no sense of simulation, for they are the universal role model, the prototype of all possible variants of the modern world. This chimerical utopia might be described as the American Dream.

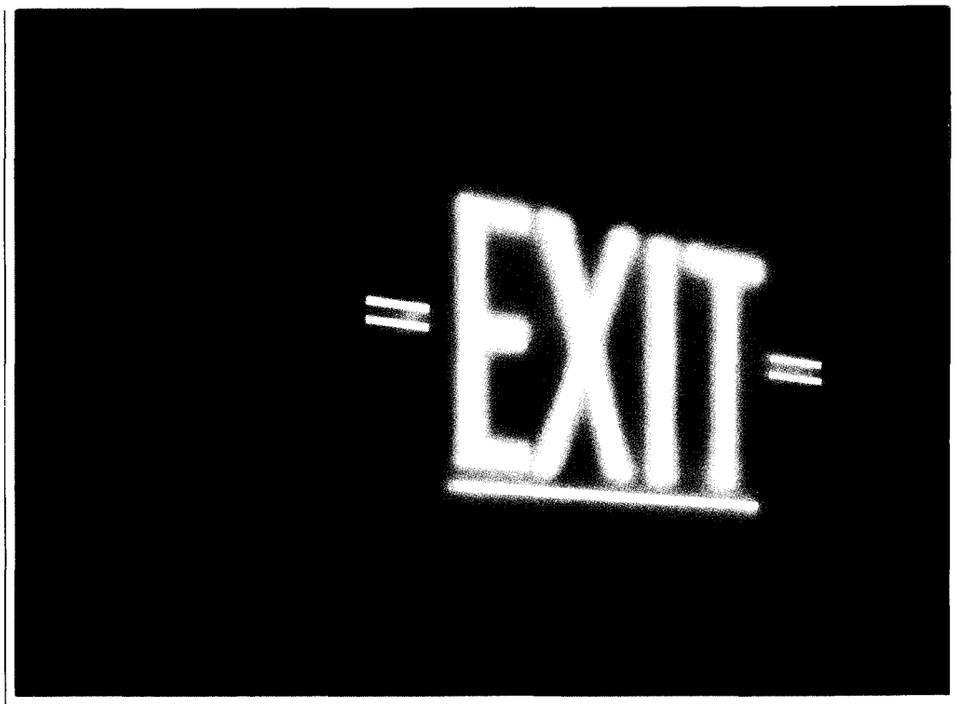
Whether or not Baudrillard's assertion that America is the last primitive society holds water, he nonetheless captures something of the mythical quality of this mercurial continent, with its multifaceted reality, its ever-shifting quicksilver face: the land of space, deserts and skies, of unfurling highways, going nowhere, going somewhere, littered with endless gas stations, the drifter's world of *Bagdad Café*, the collective madness and multi-ethnicity of many of its cities.

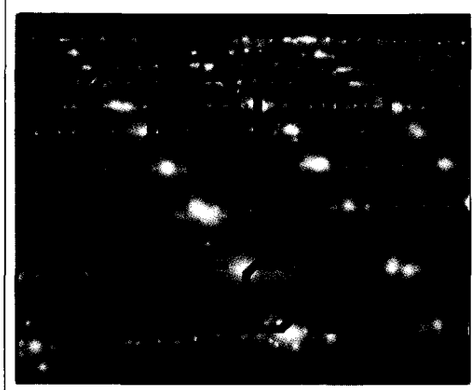
Ed Ruscha is its natural son and heir. His painting of the Stars and Stripes, entitled *Plenty Big Hotel Room (Painting for the American Indian)*, assaults us as the symbol of the dream. The emblem, as all American schoolchildren know, of apple-pie patriotism, the supposed unifier of diverse and disparate cultures, it flutters against an endless blue sky. Three black rectangles, like supermarket bar codes, censor an implied text. Language once supposedly present is being withheld. We can only guess why.

In 1956, Ed Ruscha drove into Los Angeles with his friend Mason Williams, leaving behind his strict Catholic upbringing in Oklahoma, to enrol in a commercial arts course at the Chouinard Art Institute. The image of these two young men hitting town has all the potency of a Kerouac novel. An odd job with Plantain Press as a typographer spawned his fascination with print and words, along with a developing interest in collage and the European dadaists, particularly Duchamp, as well as Kurt Schwitters's Merz poetry.

His off-beat photographic books of the sixties and seventies, particularly *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, established the tone and milieu of his work, blurring the edges between film, literature and photography. These strips of crude black-and-white snapshots, wordlessly documenting the minutiae of the street: the apartment block, the telegraph poles, diners and billboards, encapsulate Ruscha's interest in what he calls "the plastic side of life".

A mirror of middle-class realities, he juxtaposes these against the high-class cultural





The American Dream according to artist Edward Ruscha: "Exit 1990" (above) and, left, "Goodness", 1987

expectations of *beaux-arts* in a way that has often invited comparison with Warhol. The world he offers us is one of images salvaged from drive-in movies and junk culture. The suburbia of *Blue Velvet*, with its continually sprinkled lawns, or the stark desert of Wim Wenders's *Paris, Texas*.

His humour is the deadpan, wise-cracking humour of a Raymond Chandler novel, the landscape he depicts, the depopulated existential emptiness of Edward Hopper (though Ruscha himself does not like the comparison) tinged with irony.

The images he creates are as downbeat and spare as those of Raymond Carver. His search, in a postmodernist world, where the fallacies of modernist linear cultural growth have crumbled into dust, is for some new iconic definition to fill the void. Yet we live in an era where the very nature of language and meaning is up for grabs. His art is to allow the interplay of ambiguity between image and word, between the signifier and the signified.

In this space of lateral association lies the paradox, like a modern riddle of the sphinx, describing the absurdity of contemporary life. Because the word is never illustrative of the image, it is subversive. The three letters that spell SEX free-float against a cloud-filled sky. We cannot see this word, this mantra of the 20th century, without a Pavlovian buzz. Yet, at the same time, it recedes into the distance as three separate letters devoid of any collective meaning, left isolated like a piece of waste linguistic syntax, made "art" by the picture space it inhabits. The sky has become the cinematic screen for the artist's cryptic credits. Like the French symbolist poets, Ruscha generates meaning by the link of disparate and unlikely concepts.

This multiplicity of meaning, this juxtaposition and layering of references to past, present and future is further explored in his black-and-grey silhouettes, where picture-book motifs such as a pair of dark galleons, or ticky-tacky houses, their windows twinkling in the twilight, appear like fading negatives. Mysterious and foreboding, they seem to have been drained of all colour and meaning. We are reminded of Plato's assertion that art is a shadow of a shadow of an idea and thus inferior to reality. In the place of text, Ruscha has left empty white strips. With the loss of faith in meaning and language, silence is preferable.

Paradox and black humour are given further resonance in his drawing *Exit*. On one level, the image is presented as a beautifully executed piece of kitsch, an illuminated cinema sign glowing in the dark, depicted with all the skill of a sign writer. Yet, on another level, it has all the pathos and absurdity of a Beckett play. It is a stark and timely reminder that all human endeavour, all art, points to one end, and that even the artist can hope for no more than a spurious immortality.

Edward Ruscha's paintings are showing at the Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London W2, until 28 October and at Karsten Schubert, 85 Charlotte Street, London W1, until 20 October.

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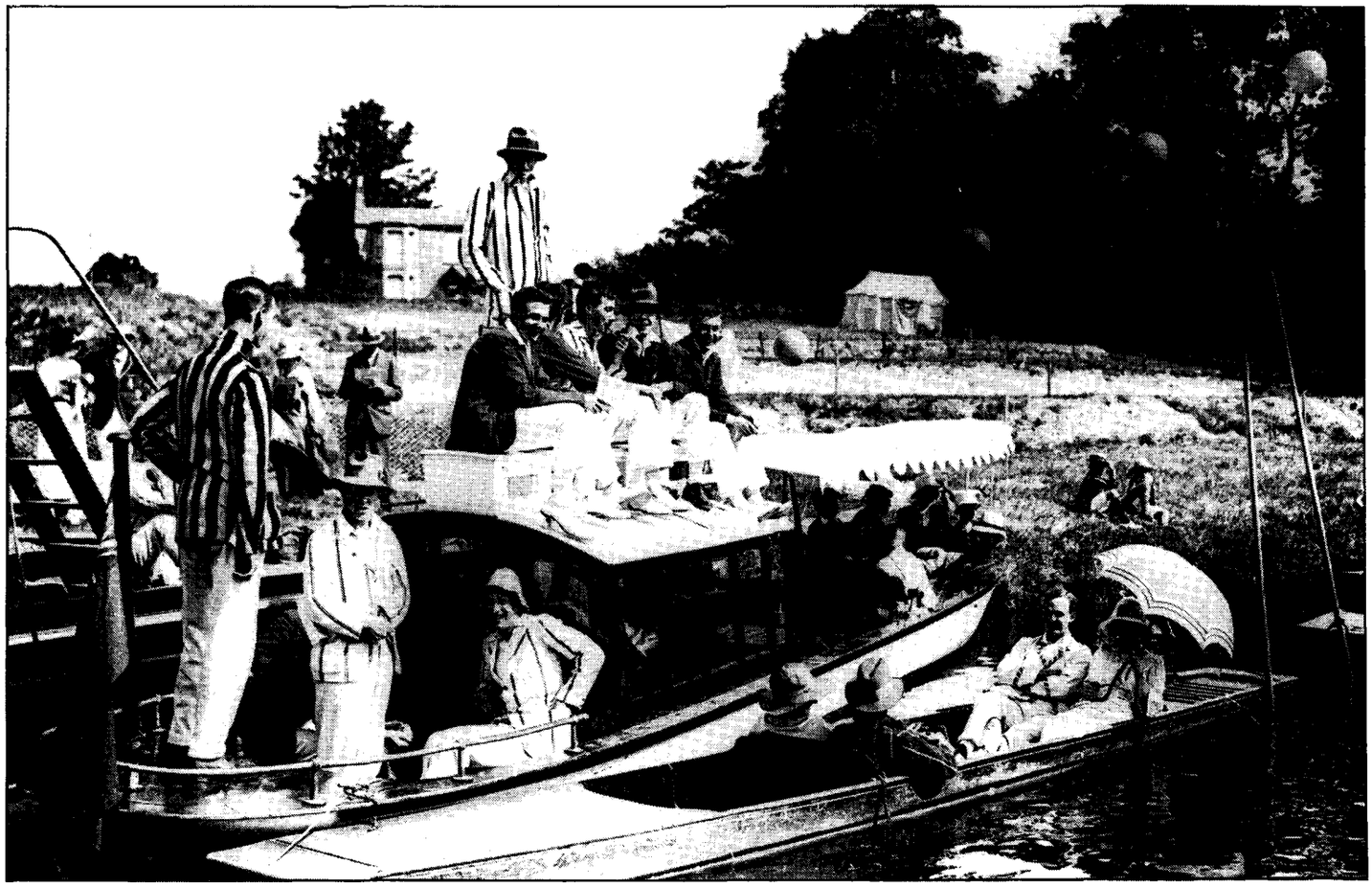

Hulton-Deutsch

Amused and amusing: Cambridge 1922

Oxford wits and Cambridge spies

OUR AGE: PORTRAIT OF A GENERATION
Noel Annan
Weidenfeld & Nicolson £20

Robert Skidelsky

Lord Annan has written a warm-hearted, but cool-headed, portrait of the generation which got its come-uppance from Mrs Thatcher—*Our Age*, he calls it. What does he mean? Not everyone who is as old as Annan, but the "intellectual aristocracy"—a term he first invented to describe a network of 19th-century families who moulded the high culture of Victorian England. In the 20th-century version, the family connections are looser, but other things remain familiar. Our Age went to university between 1919 and 1950, usually to Oxford, Cambridge, or the LSE: many of them stayed there. Nearly all of them were men, mostly from the top public schools. They formed the *mentalités* of their time, and remained arbiters of fashion in thought, politics and the arts, until challenged in their turn by a new generation.

How useful is generational history? People at all times, Annan writes, are fascinated by "the sense of belonging to a particular peer group who share common assumptions about their own society, and who are convinced they are different from their fathers". Coming up to King's College, Cambridge, in 1935, Annan is located at mid-point in Our Age. His portrait of it is wide-ranging, erudite, stylish, somewhat discursive. He is too addicted to hunting metaphors, and there is a slight suggestion of the prurient schoolmaster, perhaps a legacy of his days at Stowe under Roxburgh.

Yet he, too, has problems with the categories. He cannot dispense with a whole lot of Victorian and Edwardian foster-parents, who were not of his generation, but who taught it how, and often what, to think and feel: Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Strachey, Roger Fry, Virginia Woolf, Eliot, Pound, Lawrence, Joyce; Shaw, Keynes, Wells, Tawney, the Webbs; Diaghilev, Stravinsky and others. As he remarks, "We played variations on our predecessors' themes." And with "deviants" from Our Age as formidable as Waugh, Leavis and Oakeshott—he should surely have added Orwell—one senses a certain shrinkage of explanatory power.

There is also the problem of cohorts. Each decade had a different character. The 1920s were gay, the 1930s political, the 1940s austere. Do assumptions stay common through such shifts in mood? And if they do, isn't this less a matter of generations than of epochs? Finally, there is the Two Cultures problem raised by C P Snow. Of course scientists do help mould the *mentalité* of an age: the splitting of the atom in the Cavendish Laboratory in the

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1920s is the classic example. This happened at the time Annan is writing about, but surely not *because* of the time.

Generational history is more useful explaining changes in attitudes to art, literature, morals, manners and (perhaps) politics than changes in scientific theory, even though scientists may have generational attitudes outside their scientific work. And it is not equally useful at all times. It seems that there has to be a subversive avant-garde in place from the previous generation. And there have to be events capable of generalising the significance of its ideas.

The first world war shattered Our Age's faith in the public-school ideal of the gentleman: too decent, manly, loyal, unimaginative and brainless to avoid the slaughter of the first world war, prepare for the second, or govern properly in between. Modernism, collectivism and pacifism were the new gods of the alienated public-schoolboy. I wish Annan had explored the connections between the first two. "The modernists believed art should portray society as disintegrating and decomposing. If society is dehumanised, why depict people as recognisable human beings? They should squint out of paintings like the deformities they had become..." Does not the totalitarian temptation spring from such a dehumanised view of individuals? And is it surprising that totalitarian regimes ruthlessly suppress modernism and replace it with an equally dehumanised view of the worker as a piece of heroic machinery?

To his trinity, Annan adds "the cult of homosexuality", exemplified by the Oxford Wits in the 1920s and the Cambridge Spies in the 1930s. (Maurice Bowra, one of the Wits, dubbed them respectively the Immoral Front and the Homintern.) It is in this area of morals and manners that one seems to be both at the heart of Our Age, and of Annan's book. Whether or not they were gay—in the wide or narrow sense—the Edwardians were, above all else, hard-working. They still had a Puritan sense of Duty—to themselves and to the world. The achievements of Bloomsbury, patchy though they were, came from a marriage of Victorian habits and post-Victorian sensibility.

Our Age—at least in the 1920s—discarded the habits. It wanted, above all, to be amused and be amusing; to have a good time. This frivolity was the real enemy of promise. It helps explain why so many of the brilliant trendsetters of the 1920s achieved so little by comparison with the Edwardians. Annan's devastating verdict on Cyril Connolly—"he lived on unearned pleasure"—will do for many of them. Evelyn Waugh, the one indisputable literary genius produced by the 1920s, needed St Augustine to keep him sane—and sober.

After visiting Soviet Russia in 1925, Keynes wrote: "It is hard for an educated, decent, intelligent son of western Europe to find his ideals here, unless he has first suffered some strange and horrid process of conversion which has changed all his values." The horrid process started with the young scientists at Cambridge in the late 1920s: their totalitarian fantasies still have the power to make one shudder. The cohort of the 1930s rushed towards Marxism and communism, the two terms then being almost interchangeable: Brian Simon claimed that, at the time of the Spanish civil war, 1,000 of the 8,000 Cambridge students were party members. Political commitment went hand-in-hand with a revived Puritanism. Communism, Annan rightly says, did not capture Our Age; but many were bound to the communists by personal friendship and common causes, and for years afterwards formed a protective belt which enabled Soviet agents among them to go undetected.

Annan, who was not himself bitten by the bug, dutifully rakes over the old historical embers, without probing deeply into the causes of this mass conversion. Yet, in his seminal essay on "The Intellectual Aristocracy", he had provided a framework for understanding it. The Victorian world of religion and learning was both socially detached from business, and morally hostile to it. It could not square its conceptions of the good life with absorption in money-making. This hostility to the *spirit* of capitalism was central to the credo of the Edwardian avant-garde. The simultaneous breakdown of religious belief and the machinery of wealth-creation between the wars destroyed the delicate equipoise between the two. For a brief period, communism could combine the appeal of a religion, an explanation of breakdown, and a "scientific" technique of social progress; a heady mixture for intellectuals without faith, hope—or power.

In the 1940s, faith in communism rapidly waned, but not faith in social science. The second world war, and the Labour government which it produced, brought the technicians to power, integrating the last cohort of Our Age, and many of their aberrant predecessors, into the mainstream. Moderately collectivist, moderately hedonistic, moderately permissive; drawing their inspiration from Keynes, Beveridge and Tawney rather than Marx, they were the academics, politicians, civil servants, planners and architects who helped build the social democratic Britain which started to be dismantled in the 1980s.

What went wrong? Annan has an answer. Our Age had no sticking point. It could not hold any line. It could not fight against the distorted images of itself presented by the middle-class radicals of the 1960s, or against the sectional greed of the trade unions. It ended in a spirit of defeat, and puzzlement.

There is surely more to be said. Annan's generation saw itself as a clerisy; it ended up more like a *nomenclatura*. Once gurus become experts they lose their magic for the young, especially when the magic fails to deliver the goods. That's why I think the children of the 1980s probably do mark the start of a new generation in Annan's sense. Modernism and collectivism, the improbable bequests of Victorian high culture, have run their course. On balance, Our Age had a good innings; and in Annan it has found a distinguished chronicler.

From India with hope

INDIA: A MILLION MUTINIES NOW
V S Naipaul
Heinemann £17.50

Bhikhu Parekh

Although the overseas Indian community is talented, more than a century old, scattered over 20 countries, and has gone through most painful experiences of migration and rootlessness, it apparently never felt sufficiently puzzled by its history or identity to explore its relations with India or to analyse critically the civilisation its ancestors carried with them.

V S Naipaul, a descendant of 19th-century indentured labourers, was one of the first to feel the need to understand India as a way of making some sense of the predicament of his fellow-Indians in Trinidad. He went to India in 1962 on a voyage of self-discovery. As he explains in this book, he approached India with two contradictory images and feelings. At one level he thought of it as a country scarred by abject poverty, mindless conformism, narrow identities and human decay, precisely the qualities he had noticed in the Indians in Trinidad. This "private and personal" India filled him with a "sense of abjectness and defeat and shame", and he approached it with an "anxiety" bordering on "neurosis". The other, public and political, India, which "balanced the first", was a country with a great classical past and a great recent past in the form of an inspiring independence movement and a history of social regeneration. The first India was divided and fragmented and ruled out the very idea of Indian identity; the second involved a firm and growing sense of collective identity.

Naipaul's 1962 visit confirmed his first image of India and caused him great distress. His pain and sorrow at the predicament of Indians in Trinidad and in India turned into rage against the society and civilisation that had given them so little. The result was *An Area of Darkness*, a powerful and perceptive, but imbalanced, book, whose intemperate tone and mixture of concern and contempt for his people bears some resemblance to Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Though Indians are used to attacks by foreigners, the experience of being attacked by an overseas Indian was new to them. And since, until recently, they regarded overseas Indians

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as culturally inauthentic and largely drawn from the lower castes, the experience was also most painful. Predictably, the book provoked a hostile reaction.

It seems that Naipaul himself came to feel uneasy about it. As he says in this new book, he had asked the wrong questions and used inadequate concepts, and, as a result, he had overlooked the slow process of creative transformation already under way in 1962. He now sees a new spirit of independence and a new "rage" at work in India. Thanks to the Raj, and to creative soul-searching by generations of Indian leaders, the liberated Indian mind is beginning to rebel against the traditional identities and injustices in its search for a humane society.

The result is countless mutinies in all walks of life, each small, but all collectively representing an "immense national effort". The new spirit has inevitably led to excesses and aberrations. While these would have destroyed the country in an earlier era, the situation today is different. There is now a "central will, a central intellect, a national idea", and a widely shared commitment to humanist values, which control the excesses and harness them to the cause of national self-regeneration.

India: a million mutinies now is a story of these mutinies. Naipaul explores the nature and aetiology of the revolts of such groups as the *dalits* (the ex-untouchables), Muslims, Sikhs, the lower castes and women by tracing the life stories of selected representative individuals.

Each character tells a story, which Naipaul skilfully deconstructs and reconstructs, and the story reveals yet another facet of the totality that is India. He brings out both the contradictions of modern Indian life and the way they are glossed over or lived with. Approaching India with all five senses at full alert, as any traveller must, and gently letting a critical and affectionate intelligence guide and coordinate them, he probes opaque individuals, situations, relations, places and movements with characteristic penetration and intensity. No student of modern India can afford to ignore this book.

Yet Indian reality is too complex and confused to be adequately grasped by a single mind or conveyed in a single book, and Naipaul's is no exception. It is striking that most of his major characters are urban, middle class, middle aged and drawn from limited areas. By design, accident, or unconscious sympathy, many of them turn out to be Brahmins. And most of the lively mutineers are Hindu. For someone who places so much emphasis on intellectual revolution, Naipaul has little to say about Indian arts, literature, educational institutions, the standards of Indian scholarship, and the quality of the Indian media.

As a result, his picture of India remains not only partial but also partisan. He pays little attention to the tensions and struggles of rural India, the frustrations and agonies of youth, the widely acknowledged coarsening of the Indian sensibility as a result of aggressive capitalism, the deep fears aroused by half-a-dozen secessionist movements, and the dramatic decline in social and political morality. He also ignores the decay of almost all major institutions, the alarming increase in cases of rape and dowry death, the pervasive ethos of violence, the collapse of law and order in several parts of the country, the criminalisation of politics and the politicisation of crime, the populist gimickry that passes for politics, the rampant corruption and the lamentable middle-class lack of social concern. The profound impact of this pathology on the Indian psyche and on the character of interpersonal relations, therefore, receives little attention from Naipaul.

In many ways, *India* suffers from being rooted in, and having the character of a sequel to, *An Area of Darkness*. While the earlier book was gratuitously provocative, this one makes the opposite mistake. Having once attacked Indian society's conformism, callousness and complacency, he now stresses its mutinous spirit, humanism and rage. He talks about a central will, but offers no evidence. He sometimes sees mutinies where none exists, mistakes a mindless explosion of anger for mutiny, and equates the search for a breathing space with a radical desire to restructure the social order. He does not see that some of the mutinies cancel each other out, and that, in the absence of a coherent ideology and national organisation, they add up to little. Nor does he appreciate that traditional Hindu society has long known how to emasculate revolts, and even how to use them as a means of its survival and self-reproduction.

Every major group that revolted, be it the Jains, the Buddhists, the lower castes or the untouchables, eventually settled down within traditional India and became closed and static, leaving the wider structure largely unchanged. So mutiny is not new to India. Naipaul's optimistic conclusion that things are radically different today, and that the little mutinies will not go the way that of 1857 did, does not follow from the rest of the book and has only a limited basis in facts. None of his major characters shows the moral depth and the intellectual calibre required to carry through the kind of intellectual and moral change he desires. It is interesting that at the very moment when many thinking Indians, deeply worried about their society's capacity for survival, let alone regeneration, are listening with sympathy to the kinds of criticism Naipaul made in *An Area of Darkness*, he should feel persuaded to take the opposite view.

Rambo woman

MERCY
Andrea Dworkin
Secker & Warburg £13.99

Janet Barron

Andrea Dworkin is the subject of Andrea Dworkin's latest novel. "I've come into my own as a woman of letters," she writes at the start. "I admit to a cool, elegant intellect... my mind is clear and cool and my prose is exceedingly skilful." After such a boast on the first page, one might expect *Mercy* to be written with detachment and precision. Instead, it is a long, largely unpunctuated, scream. Dworkin came out of the sixties peace movement hell-bent on war. In her last book, *Letters from a War Zone*, the enemy was Man. In *Mercy*, the target has spun around, for Dworkin now wants to thrust her fist down the throats of feminists.

"As a woman of letters," she declares (again), "I fight for my kind, for women, for freedom. The brazen scream distracts. The wild harridans are not persuasive." This plea for rationality does not survive for long. "I got screwed up," Dworkin admits, pouring out the sad effects of her compulsion to spend her life playing Russian roulette with rape. She has a thirst for danger, modelling herself on the boozy, don't-give-a-damn tough guys of the American tradition. *Mercy* is the story of a little girl crying, "I'm sorry, momma," in the dark. Andrea, the narrator, sees a safe flat and a locked door as a bourgeois sell-out, preferring the hazards of street life in cardboard city. She hangs around in late-night dives, hoping to pick up a man who will give her a bed for the night, stoned out of her mind on vodka, dope and mescalin. "I want the fascist," she confesses, "I want him bad. I am fresh-killed meat."

Mercy is filled with this lust for violence, as Dworkin finds intense erotic pleasure in subjugation and domination. Her favourite word is "fucking", and she is fascinated by abuse. She argues in favour of prostitution and pornography, attacking women who object to sex work as her intellectual inferiors, contemptuously characterised as "Jacobins" and "Stalinists". "Freedom is implicit in prostitution because sex is," she declares. "Prostitution is only an apparent oppression that permits some women to be sexually active without bourgeois restraints."

This is a familiar line of argument from those who work in the sex industry, stripped of any concern for class and economic necessity, oblivious of the very real forces of exploitation. It is an abrupt volte-face by the author of *Pornography* and *Intercourse*, but it does explain the obsessive nature of Dworkin's earlier works. Dworkin thrives on being a victim, fantasising about oppression. At the start of *Mercy*, she makes the crazy claim that being a woman is like being a Jew in the Nazi regime, quoting Jean-Paul Sartre to give this intellectual weight. By the end of the novel, it is the women's movement that is seen as the oppressive social structure, as Dworkin declares she wants (literally) to "fuck the feminists".

In place of feminist theory, Dworkin now desires the power through aggression of the worst types of "masculinity". She presents herself as a tough, street-wise woman who finds sexual release through violence, whether inflicted on herself by men or carried out on other women. Sex doesn't happen in this book without gashed thighs, blood, infection and disease. "I was born down the block from Walt Whitman," she tells us in every chapter. "You don't get undressed" in this neighbourhood: "You

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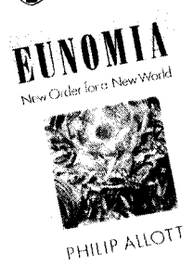

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stay dressed always, all the time, your boots on and a knife near you or in your hand. You get boots with metal reinforced tips, no matter what." With this array of weapons she sounds more like Rambo than Rimbaud, her literary ideal. She seems to see a full stop as a phallic symbol, and, as a result, her prose is awful. "It wears you down," she writes, "it wears you down..." Yes, it does.

The sea, the sea

OMEROS
Derek Walcott
Faber £9.99 paperback/£17.50 hardback

John Lucas

Omeros begins with Philoctete, an islander of St Lucia, being photographed by tourists who "try taking/his soul with their cameras". Then he and his friends, Achille and Hector, turn to their work of cutting down trees to make canoes so that the latter two can pursue their trade as fishermen. Some 320 pages later, the poem ends with Achille hauling his canoe called "In God We Trust" up the beach, and taking from it a catch of shining mackerel. In between these two events lies what must be one of the great poems of our time.

In a short review it is impossible even to hint at the scope and grandeur of *Omeros*, but it seems fair to say that it's a poem of epic proportions. The title may indeed suggest that Walcott is self-consciously setting up as epic poet (*Omeros* is the Greek word for Homer, though Walcott is careful to supply a more fitting genealogy: "*O* was the conch-shell's invocation, *mer* was/both mother and sea in our Antillean patois,/*os*, a grey bone"), and the poem's form and structure strengthen this suggestion.

Omeros's seven books are divided into 64 chapters, each one containing three sections, and, with the exception of one brief couplet section, the poem is throughout written in three-line stanzas, though Walcott eschews Dante's *terza rima* for a rhyme sequence employed as a narrative device to propel the poem forward. In addition to these formal devices, Walcott makes use of what, in an earlier poem, he called "multitudinous dialects": "nation language", plus a kind of Creole patois, then a host of mimicked speech patterns, and finally, and most fully, his own wonderfully rich, implicated language, drenched in metaphor and simile, many of these repeated or echoed or invoked in a manner that feels natural to the epic.

Yet it would be quite wrong to give the impression that *Omeros* is in any sense riding on the back of earlier epic poems. Its self-consciousness includes an awareness of difference as well as connection. In this poem, Hector and Achille fight over Helen, but Achille doesn't kill Hector, who dies when he crashes the transport van he's taken to driving, having decided to give up the "simple" fisherman's life. Walcott uses episodes from *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid*, but his multiple narratives exploit these and are in no way constricted by them.

In addition to many minor strands, there are three main narratives. One concerns the trio with whom the poem opens, plus Helen, the beautiful woman in the yellow dress who leaves Achille for Hector, and Ma Kilman, the island witch/sibyl who runs the No Pain Café and cures Philoctete of his wound. (It is caused by self-hatred and shame.) In one extraordinary episode, Achille, desperate for treasures to give Helen, has tried plundering a French warship, sunk by an English ship during the Napoleonic wars. But it doesn't work, he can't rob the sea. Then, under the influence of sunstroke, he imagines that he has sailed back across the Atlantic and up the Congo to the village from where his father's family was sold into slavery.

The experience and running sore of slavery are, of course, central to the poem's meaning, but so is the son-father relationship. This is picked up in the second main narrative, about a Major Plunkett and his wife, Maud. They come to St Lucia after the second world war, in which he fought and was wounded. He longs for the son he will never have (though he finds that a Lieutenant Plunkett was killed in the assault on the sunk French warship). By the end of the poem his wife is dead (her death and her husband's mourning for her are harrowingly described) and he is a permanent exile from an England he has grown to dislike. (Walcott provides convincing evidence of why this should be.)

Exile, then, is another thread binding the poem's meanings together, and is crucial to the third narrative strand. At the centre of this is the poet himself, a wanderer from his island, traveller in, among other places, Boston, Ireland, London, but re-visiting, both imaginatively and in fact, the island of his birth, where he tries to talk to his dead father. The father urges him not to betray the island's "green simplicities", and this releases meditations on the search for a language that will be adequate to his complex sense of separation and identity. (Throughout the poem, the emblem for this is the sea-swift, flashing from continent to continent, its beak a pen's nib or the darting rush of inspiration.) There's a marvellous moment when the poet and the Major talk, just after the death of Maud. The Major says:

"'Our wanderer's home. Is he?'
I said: 'For a while, sir.'
Too crisply...
'Been travellin' a bit, what?'
I forgot the melody of my own accent,
but I knew I'd caught him, and he knew he'd been caught,

caught out in the class-war. It stirred my contempt.
He knew the 'what' was a farce, I knew it was not

officer quality, a strutting RSM..."

Poor Plunkett. Yet, in fact, nothing is more moving than Walcott's handling of the relationship between man and wife and the sense of the man's desperate desire to find a form of belonging, a language by means of which he can communicate with others. But then that's true of all of them, as the narratives endlessly reveal.

For the glory of *Omeros* lies in the manner of its telling, in Walcott's masterly twining of the narrative threads, and also in the poem's seemingly inexhaustible linguistic riches. Walcott has often and rightly been praised for his descriptive ability, especially of the Caribbean seas. Here, where the sea is the grandest of all the poem's protagonists, he achieves the almost impossible task of again and again finding fresh images for it. It's necessary, of course, that he should do so, for "Omeros" himself, the old blind sailor, is also called "Seven Seas", his tale forever old, forever new.

Nevertheless, Walcott's achievement is cause for wonder. Towards the end of the poem, the endlessly metamorphosing Omeros appears to the poet, like Virgil to Dante, and, in what is perhaps the most astonishing section of the entire work, leads him through a visionary Malebolge, a hellish underworld (based on the sulphur pit of St Lucia's volcano), where he shows him the torments of all those who have harmed the island that he himself praises as "a place of light with luminous valleys/under thunderous clouds". The island is threatened, however; and, though the poem ends with Achille's great catch of mackerel, we are not allowed to forget the warnings of the sea's being fished out, or of the inevitable changes that those tourists forebode: they, too, are there at the end, still trying to take souls with their cameras.

The mordancy of that pun is typical of the poem's recognition that history is a series of tragic unfoldings. Yet, when Achille leaves the beach, "the sea was still going on." The sea's narrative *is* tragic: it ferries slaves across the Atlantic triangle, is the wrecker of ships, the site of wars. But it is also affirming: the source of life and a begetter of this great poem.

Flashman at large

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES: WHO RUNS BRITAIN?
Jeremy Paxman
Michael Joseph £16.99

Anthony Wright

If you go to bed with someone regularly, as many of us do with Jeremy Flashman, you get to know their seductive little ways. In his case, the turn-on routine more than makes up in animal pleasure what it lacks in artistic subtlety. Predictable and irresistible. Every night, it is the same question—what's a brilliant young chap like me doing interviewing a boring old fart like you?—asked with the same languid smirk. Only the words and the victims change.

It is good to find that he brings a similar approach to his day job. This is a "Who Runs

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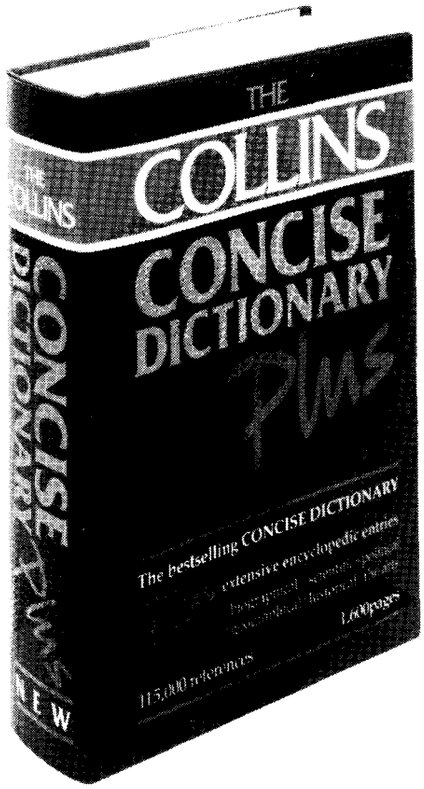

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Britain" book and Jeremy has been out and about looking for the Runners. He has interviewed lots of them (though "a handful of self-important figures declined to talk to me"), many of whom will now wish they, too, had been more self-important. He has talked to Also-Runners about them (it's a fair bet that Max Hastings—described as "a regular fishing and shooting guest"—will find himself with more free weekends from now on). And he has dug up lots of facts of the "how many bishops went to Eton" kind, plus every good debunking story he can lay his hands on.

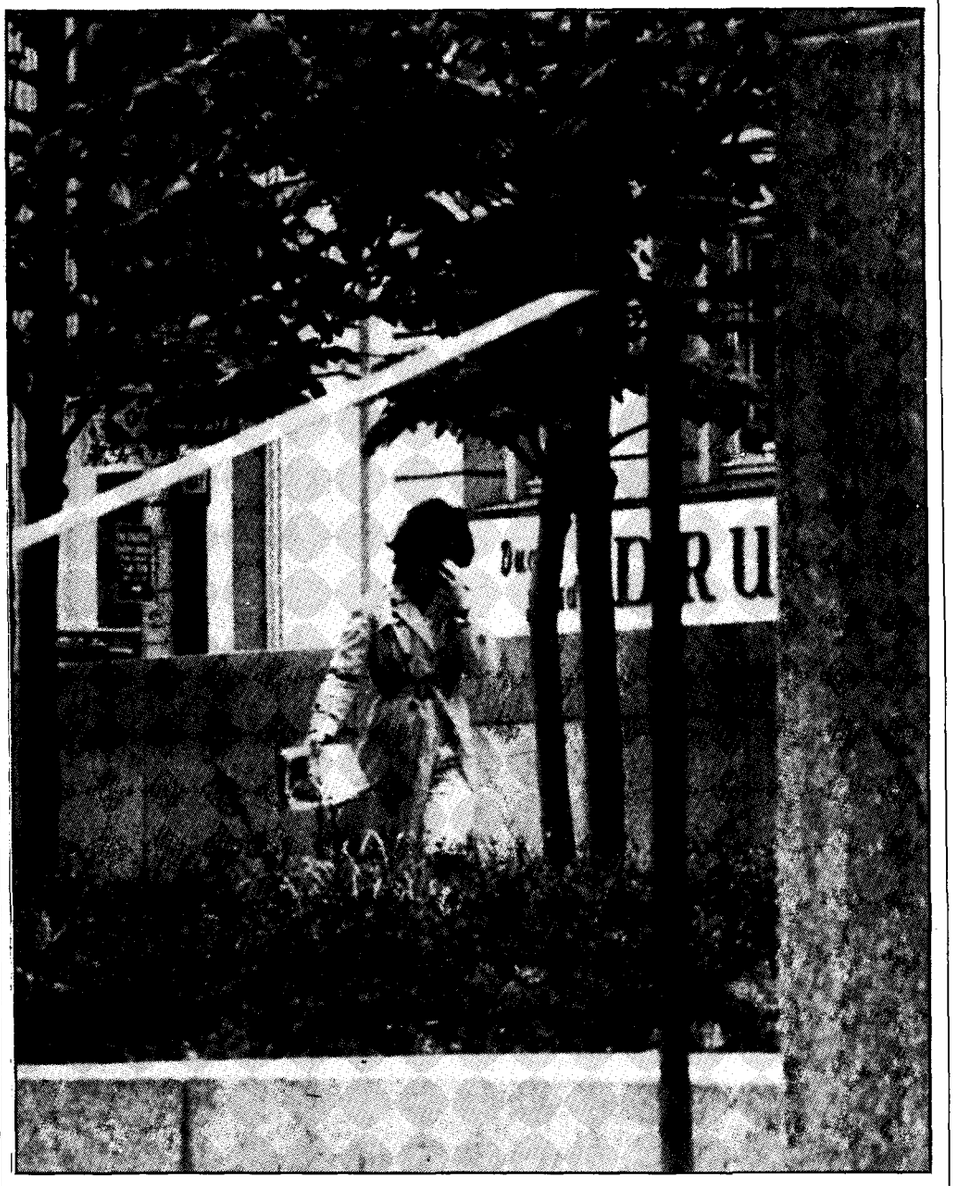
The result is thoroughly entertaining and will not disappoint Flashman fans who might have worried about how well his standard question would survive the shift from screen to page. It survives entirely intact. Not only that, but we learn more about the great Questioner himself. Enoch Powell told him that his quest for the establishment was like "hunting the snark"; but to the reader it is more like hunting the smirk. He cites H L Mencken as his text—journalist is to politician as dog is to lamppost—and clearly sees himself as one of its most literal interpreters. Those who enjoy his nightly leg-lifting on the box will also enjoy watching it being liberally lifted here, from bishoprics to boardrooms, dukedoms to dealing rooms.

It's great fun—never have words like "ineffable" and "insouciant" carried such venom—and full of splendid stories, both ancient and modern. Ancient: Lady Anne Foley to husband—"Dear Richard. I give you joy. I have just made you the father of a beautiful boy. Yours, etc. PS. This is not a circular." Modern: Major General Christopher Airy, commander of the Household Division, still walking to the front of trains to say thank you to the driver.

Back to the Runners though. Inevitably, Jeremy does not think much of them. He does not like the old aristocratic lot, nor the postwar Great and Good of the professional classes, nor the Greedy and the Greasy of the Thatcher years. They all get the lamppost treatment. The aristos have dumped duty but kept privilege. The public schools have become selfish examination factories and have even ditched the "don't fornicate in old school braces" kind of ethos with which Etonians were once dispatched into the world. The Tory party has been suburbanised by Morden Man. The postwar establishment of professional amateurs connived in what the head of the home civil service once called "the orderly management of decline". Their successors have neither their faults nor their virtues, philistine Money Men of UK plc whose private greed feeds the prevailing public squalor.

This merrily gloomy narrative is about all we get by way of analysis. Lots of Runners but not much about the race. In fact, after a zesty start, you feel the book sinking as the author begins to sense that this kind of methodological individualism is not going to reveal Who Runs Britain after all, let alone who should run Britain. He starts to talk about "confusion", "aimlessness" and lack of "vision". At the end, he seems to decide that the only reliable conclusion is that most things that matter are still run by chaps (male) who have been to Thatcherised public schools rather than the "egalitarian swamp" of a grotty state system ruined by the "claptrap talked by educational radicals". It is the old class system, but now minus the old stuff about duty and service. Class without class.

Jeremy's alternative? This remains unclear, but seems to be something like meritocracy plus public service. He rightly remarks that the Labour Party has never even ruffled the establishment (unlike the Thatcherites), let alone built a counter-establishment. He could have added that it even did the public schools their biggest favour by abolishing the grammar schools while leaving them untouched. So where do we go from here? Unfortunately, my copy of this book had a final sentence missing. All I got was: "The country needs a new vision, a new sense of what it means to be British. And a new role. But to whom can the nation look?" Flashman fans, used to questions like this, will have no trouble filling in the name that should come next.



Have you ever seen a photograph so full of suspense? It's not just the details: hand reaching up to sunglasses, tightly belted mac, the ill-disguised urgency of the woman's stride. Most good photographs extend beyond the split-second depicted to include—or so it seems—what has just happened, what is about to happen. In this photo, everything is in doubt; it is explained not by the time contained in it, but by the time surrounding it. It is an image incapable of adequately articulating itself. And yet, unlike the freeze-frame—straining to be back in the flow of time—it is self-contained, complete. Hence the autistic fascination of Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* (Cape £25).

Throughout, Sherman is the only person in the picture, but there is usually a sense of another menacing, prying—implicitly male—presence just beyond the picture. Actually, this presence is Sherman's own camera, defining the film-frame of mind and situation in which her *alter egos* find themselves. On one level, then—as in Arthur Danto's plodding introduction—you can talk of women seeing themselves in terms of scenes from B-movies, but the real point is bigger than that. Film, as Don Delillo said, "is not just the 20th-century art form. It's a part of the 20th-century mind. It's the world seen from inside." GEOFF DYER

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Old times

THE DWARFS
Harold Pinter
Faber £12.99

Sean French

Harold Pinter is the only British playwright of his age or younger who has invented a recognisable form of dialogue. He appropriated the clipped, elegant speech of the plays he knew as a young actor—especially Noel Coward—and transformed it by shifting it into the universe of Beckett.

I remember a review by an Oxford professor of English literature, John Carey (it was of Scott Turow's first novel, *Presumed Innocent*), which scornfully quoted a few expletives and said that we had enough of this sort of realism in life without needing it to be reproduced in art. But Pinter has shown that banalities and clichés, repeated and examined, can take on an extraordinary music and suggestiveness of their own. The shifting rhythms of dialogue in plays like *The Caretaker* and *No Man's Land* are among the most intense pleasures in the modern theatre.

His early novel, *The Dwarfs*, now published for the first time, shows how quickly the young Pinter discovered his own gifts. The squalid London setting is immediately familiar, as is the plot—the relationship of a group of four young people disturbed by an act of betrayal.

In a short foreword, Pinter says he wrote the novel "in the early fifties, before I began writing plays". But, in reality, this text barely qualifies as a novel at all. Kenneth Tynan once playfully dismissed the whole novel genre as dialogue with padded-out stage directions. Reading *The Dwarfs*, one can see what he meant. In general, Pinter describes his characters' actions and then furnishes pages and pages of their dialogue, so much that the reader is continually having to count back in twos to a "Mark said" or "asked Len" to discover who is actually saying what. Chapter 26, for example, is just over four pages long. Here is everything in the chapter that isn't dialogue: "Len stood up... Len sat down... Len stood up... Len walked about the room, his hands stabbing... Len sat down and closed his eyes." And Mark is once described as "standing".

There are chapters written in a different style. The disruptive woman, Virginia, is seen in a more conventionally lyrical style, and other chapters are written through the eyes of a malevolent observer of the quartet (the members of which the observer refers to as "the dwarfs"). But the latter embodies a sense of threat that would be better left unstated, and, when Pinter adapted the novel for the stage in the early sixties, it became, he says, "quite abstract, because I omitted the essential character of Virginia from it". This is a neat description of his theatre: situations from which the essence seems to have been surgically removed, leaving only the enigmatic shards.

It is in the remarkably accomplished dialogue that the young Pinter takes wing. The effect is impossible to reproduce in a short review because it works by a sustained process of comic reiteration and re-emphasis. All that's missing are the voices of some fine young Pinter actors.

Though hardly a successful novel, this enjoyable book was well worth re-issuing. But it is not entirely clear what it is that we are reading. The author's brief note informs us that, in 1989, he decided it needed "further work. This work consisted mainly of cuts. I cut five chapters, which seemed to me redundant, and reorganised or condensed a number of other passages." Does this mean Pinter didn't actually rewrite anything?

The Dwarfs is also a tantalising reminder of the Pinter we're not getting any more. He has produced plenty of variable screen adaptations and interesting short dramatic works but no full-length play since 1978. Perhaps this prentice work will coax him back.

Illness as angel

PROUST
Ronald Hayman
Heinemann £20

Paul Binding

The rejection of the first part of Proust's great novel by NRF on the advice of the author's greatest older contemporary, André Gide, must be among the most famous in literary history. A year later, when Proust had had it published by Grasset at his own expense, Gide read it and wrote: "I feel bitterly regretful and remorseful... I believed you were—shall I admit it?—'*du côté de chez Verdurin*'; a snob, a socialite amateur."

With characteristic generosity Gide set about making amends; with equal generosity of spirit, Proust never resented Gide's earlier action. Later readers, perhaps especially after reading the biographies of, first, Painter and now Hayman, have to feel that, had they been in Gide's position, the same negative decision might have been taken for precisely the same reason. Proust in those years does indeed give the impression of a snob, a socialite amateur, and little else.

That he was so much else is a mystery which neither biography succeeds in clarifying. Proust seems to bring us to the very limits of the biographer's arts. The almost manic sycophant to the well born that one meets in the chapters about Proust's youth and early manhood, ever-ready with extravagant compliments, able to praise salon productions as if they were masterworks from the Renaissance, is about as unpromising a figure as one can find. And, on Hayman's showing, even the commendable Dreyfusard activities had about them too much of calculated theatre and psychological self-serving.

Before severe illness took him over, this compulsive neurotic had established a highly eccentric invalid routine, involving getting up only for the night, and eating unsatisfactory meals at strange times. His relationship with his parents and brother can be checked and balanced—as it is by Hayman—against the fiction (in *A la Recherche* Proust simply omitted his brother), but, except with hindsight, one cannot argue from this beginning to the later great novelist, as one can with, say, D H Lawrence.

Even in his twenties, though, illness played a major role in Proust's life. And those terrible bouts of asthma, which, in his thirties, could go on for 55 hours, surely hold the key to Proust's extraordinary development (one is tempted to say transformation). Hayman writes extremely well about Proust's health. As a former asthma sufferer myself, I can vouch for the authenticity of his accounts of this affliction, in which the victim feels suspended between life and death, outside space and time. Illness, quite as much as passing time, would seem to have been Proust's angel, the transfigurer of the pasts, of pleasures and people loved. (For Proust was only in his early forties when the first part of *A la Recherche* appeared.)

Hayman shows extremely clearly the progression of Proust's great and all-demanding work: how rejection in fact stimulated him, enabling him to write at the necessary slower narrative pace; how events in Proust's own life intervened in the narration and were absorbed into it. He fascinatingly intimates scenes that would have slotted into the apparently finished book had Proust lived longer. Proust's relationship to the literary world and to different publishers is also most illuminatingly done. And, while emphasising that Proust's are often composite portraits, Hayman reveals the way in which his friends and acquaintances passed from life into literature.

Nevertheless, there is much more I felt I wanted to know, or have explained. Proust's friends—and not just the inner circle of the personally committed, such as Reynaldo Hahn—were obviously devoted to him, admiring of him even, and were far less surprised by his achievement than were such men as Gide. Neither Painter nor Hayman succeeds in convincing me that Proust could have inspired such loyalties. It is the same with Proust's lovers and quasi-lovers. He must have had a vitality that has eluded his later analysts. Just as clearly, there must have been an intellectual toughness and daring from the first, kept concealed like an assassin's knife.

Hayman is anxious not to make moral judgments, and yet Proust, with his sense of the thirst both after righteousness and after evil, all but begs for this. When we come to the most baffling part of Proust's life, the sexual sadism of his last years, Hayman has less to tell than Painter, but tells it more shockingly, without feeling the need to explain or apologise. Two cages, each containing a starved rat, were brought into the male brothel; when they were released, the rats devoured each other with heart-rending screams. But they didn't rend the heart of Proust, who masturbated. Proust, that voyager into inclusive consciousness, was unable to journey into those horrifyingly painful

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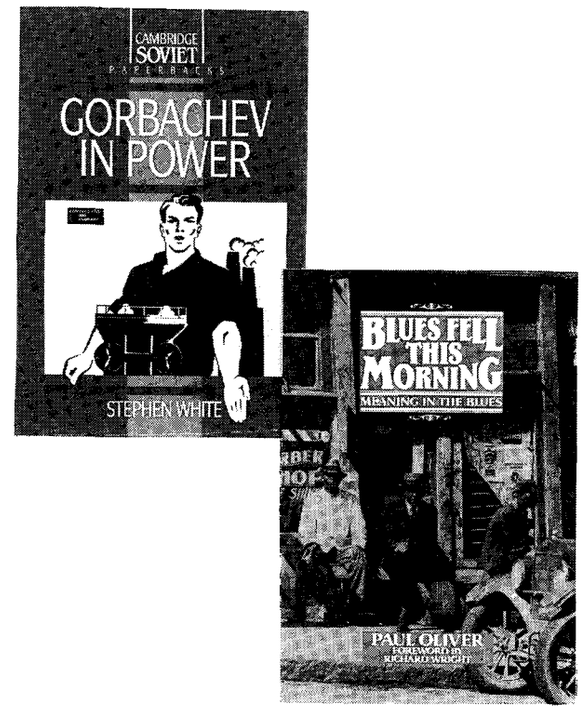

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sensations of the animals, for whom, like some Satanic producer, he'd commanded destruction and death.

Not accepting the rather too easy notion of human pluralism by which Proust and, with him, Hayman are taken, I find this cruelty tragically vitiating, both in the life and in the stupendous work that was its apparent justification.

Nobody to bury

THEM: VOICES FROM THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN
Jonathon Green
Secker & Warburg £16.99

Clive Davis

A comment by the South African-born writer, Christopher Hope—one of the speakers recorded in *Them*—reflects the theme of Jonathon Green's book. The life of an immigrant, says Hope, is a kind of bereavement: the problem is that there is nobody to bury. Many of Green's interviewees are still in mourning in one way or another, some for the country they left behind, others for the hopes and ambitions that have yet to be fulfilled.

Green's previous excursion into oral history was *Days in the Life*, a widely praised anthology of reminiscences from the sixties generation. In *Them*, he has cast his net much wider. "Immigrant", in everyday speech, has come to refer solely to black and brown people. Green uses it in its wider sense, making space for refugees from eastern Europe and South America, as well as Australians from Earls Court.

In all, he recorded 103 interviews, most of them taking place last year. Green allows each person to speak uninterrupted. The contributions are cross-cut and arranged under a variety of headings, from "The Decision to Leave" to "Teach Yourself English" and the inevitable "Thatcher's Britain". By the time he had finished the last interview, Green had recorded more than half a million words. The finished work contains just under half that total. Anyone who has conducted any sort of media interview will know that this is an impressive strike-rate: Green could have been even more ruthless in his editing, though he would probably have sacrificed some of the book's multi-layered texture, its portraits of newcomers to Britain making their way in the world, sometimes in unison, sometimes in bleak isolation.

The episodic structure has its advantages and disadvantages. As might be expected, the most vivid speakers have most to gain. The Nigerian, Simi Bedford, reconstructs her English public-school upbringing with flair and poignancy. Michael Ignatieff's observations on the tribal loyalties of British class politics have been aired elsewhere, but they are worth hearing again. Don Atyeo delivers a pungent verdict on the role of the monarchy: "Unlike Australia, unlike France, unlike most other places, you pick up your newspaper and realise that you are actually second-class as a human because there is the Queen staring out at you..."

The trio mentioned above are all associated with the press or TV. Green leans heavily—too heavily at times—on media people. One other drawback of his technique is that people who are being interviewed seldom drop their guard. There is always a temptation to speak as a representative of a particular ethnic group rather than as an individual. Most of us, besides, want to be thought of as reasonable, intelligent and broad-minded. There is only the occasional lapse here, as when a Dutch graduate of the LSE rails against anti-Rushdie Muslims: "This is very racist but I would like to chuck them out... I would like to devise some kind of list of questions that they should answer to prove basically that they are free spirits."

As for the overall judgment on Britain, the tone is pragmatic. For the white contributors, in particular, life here is preferable to the existence they knew before. What is more surprising is the near-unanimous hostility to the Thatcher decade. Virtually the only person with a good word to say for the eighties is a French woman who confines herself to marvelling at the improvement in supermarket food. Does this truly reflect Green's findings, or has he indulged in some discreet editorialising? Or did he, perhaps, catch his interviewees in a bad month for mortgage rates?

An ardent Atlanticist

WHEN SHRIMPS LEARN TO WHISTLE: SIGNPOSTS FOR THE NINETIES
Denis Healey
Michael Joseph £15.99

Ben Pimlott

Nikita Khrushchev is responsible for the title. Denis Healey sees him as a Gorbachev prototype, but with a serious technical flaw: his adherence to traditional ideology. "We are in favour of *détente*," the late general secretary once declared, "but if anybody thinks that for this reason we shall forget about Marx, Engels and Lenin, he is mistaken. This will happen when shrimps learn to whistle." The phrase, presumably, is the Russian or Ukrainian equivalent of "when pigs learn to fly". As Healey says, teaching shrimps to whistle has been Mikhail Gorbachev's most extraordinary achievement, creating a new world of opportunity and deadly danger, which we are only just beginning, blinkingly, to perceive.

Yet the label does not really describe the package, for this is a book primarily not about the open-plan internationalist future but about the tightly delineated past: 43 years of ruminations, mainly on cold-war themes, by the greatest foreign secretary (as the author quietly and reasonably implies) we never had. The "Signposts for the Nineties"—a handful of mainly journalistic pieces from 1988 to 1990—are the most ephemeral and least interesting part of the volume. It is the longer pieces, often Fabian essays or lectures written before Healey had a major responsibility, which make this a memorable work.

Politicians' literary and rhetorical goulashes do not often gladden a reviewer's heart. If this one is a pleasure rather than a penance, that is probably for two reasons. First, there is a temporal hole in the middle of the book, which contains nothing from the quarter century during which Healey was important enough for caution to be the starting-point of any pronouncement. Second, unlike almost every other contemporary politician I have ever read, Healey is capable of not playing to the gallery. He was not (and perhaps is not) an unambitious player. But he displays an indifference to party prejudice which borders on the arrogant, and he seems to address us—whether flatteringly or contemptuously, one is never quite sure—as if he were speaking only for an Olympian audience of the truly great, the George Kennans, Paul Nitzes, Willy Brandts, Gladwyn Jebbs and J K Galbraiths who inhabit his own cerebral world. The result might be insufferably pompous; in fact, there is a power to his voice that justifies the conceit.

Denis Healey became international secretary of the Labour Party in 1945, only a few years away in time from his own undergraduate Marxism, but a million light years in experience and outlook. When he writes that "the West, and Europe in particular, now faces a world as different from that of 1987 as the world of 1947 was from that of 1939," he might have been describing, too, the pre- and postwar Healey: many of the early pieces have the zeal of the convert denouncing his own youthful philosophical errors.

By the late 1940s, Healey found himself in the world of Ernest Bevin and the Marshall Plan, and of an offensively poised Stalinism, whose potential for aggression (he now admits) he exaggerated. He was then, and he remains today, an ardent Atlanticist. In his 1952 Fabian essay, "Power Politics and the Labour Party", he roundly denounced the utopians and the Third-Force enthusiasts, firmly predicting: "Britain's fundamental interest in unity with the United States will remain supreme"—a sentiment from which he has never wavered.

He was scathing, in one of the best essays in this book, written in 1955, about "neutralism". He remains scathing in his 1990 commentary, with later culprits in mind: "In the Labour Party it was often a lethal mixture of anti-Americanism and unilateralism, inspired by nostalgia for a world in which Britain could take all the decisions for itself alone." Hence his 1955 description of it as "nationalism with an inferiority complex", which connects with a third major theme in Healey's understanding of foreign policy: the centrality of nationalism, which he saw from the start as, "the one force strong enough to defeat all comers, whether the imperialism of the past or the totalitarianism of the present."

It is a point he returns to at the end, remind-

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ing us that the Iran-Iraq war, in which Shia Muslim fought Shia Muslim, demonstrated the falsity of the view that religious fundamentalism could be an overriding force. He is scornful, too, of the New Right's foolish belief that, in the east, communist ideology can simply be replaced by the crude ideology of the free market.

He concludes with a reminder of the growing marginality in world affairs, not only of Britain, but of Europe and even the United States. Yet here lies a cruel contradiction. For his idiom remains today, as in the 1940s, that of the god-like postwar world builders, who believed from the sanctuary of their Washington and London conference rooms that the new order was theirs for the making. Soviet shrimps may have learnt to whistle: but is there much chance of third-world crustaceans learning the same tune?

Economical with the truth

THE PENGUIN BOOK OF LIES
Philip Kerr (editor)
Viking £15.95

Justine Picardie

As Philip Kerr writes in his anthology of lies, "Would you honestly have purchased a book entitled *The Penguin Book of Truth*? I think not..." And he is quite right, of course. We are so often enthralled by other people's badness and wicked behaviour; how gratifying it is to know that we have never told such terrible lies (and how soothing, if we have, to discover that we are not alone in our mendacity).

This anthology contains a multitude of lies and liars, along with exposés and reflections on the meaning of deceit. What is clear is that our delight in lies is one of the reasons that there are so many successful liars. As Robert Browning's Mr Sludge observes, "There's a real love of a lie,/Liars find ready-made for lies they make,/ As hand for glove, or tongue for sugar-plum."

One of the greatest defenders of liars was Oscar Wilde, whose observation entitled "The Decay of Lying" is extracted in Kerr's anthology. Taking the form of a dialogue between two young men, one of them, Vivian, declares, "Facts are not merely finding a footing-place in history, but they are usurping the domain of Fancy, and have invaded the kingdom of Romance. Their chilling touch is over everything." But, he continues, "Society sooner or later must return to its lost leader, the cultured and fascinating liar. Who he was who first, without ever having gone out to the rude chase, told the wandering caveman at sunset how he had dragged the Megatherium from the purple darkness of its jasper cave, or slain the Mammoth in single combat and brought back its gilded tusks, we cannot tell... Whatever was his name or race, he certainly was the true founder of social intercourse. For the aim of the liar is simply to charm, to delight, to give pleasure."

It is a view that Ernest Hemingway agreed with. He believed (or so he said, if we can believe anything he said) that "a liar in full flower... is as beautiful as cherry trees, or apple trees when they are in full blossom. Who should ever discourage a liar?"

But before enthusiasm for the art of lying sweeps the reader away, we come to the truly terrible lies that have caused immense suffering. There are many to choose from: the lies told by the Nazis and by Stalin; the lies that bolstered the Vietnam war and the bombing of Cambodia. And then there are the Watergate lies, the seedy dishonesty of the Westland affair, and the murky untruths of the Iran-Contra operation.

This depressing catalogue of human cruelty and deceit in the 20th century is enlivened by some lighter extracts. But Penny Vincenzi's sparkling treatise on the importance of lying to one's spouse when committing adultery is somewhat undermined by following Donald Woods's account of the lies that were told at the inquest into Steve Biko's death. And Vincenzi's piece seems even more trivial when it precedes a description of the lies told by neo-Nazis who deny that Jews were sent to gas chambers.

The reason for these juxtapositions is that the anthology is a chronological one, running from the Bible to the *Independent* (which should please Andreas Whittam-Smith). So, to avoid exasperation, it is probably not a good idea to read the book, as I did, from start to finish. As an anthology to dip into, however, it is both pleasurable and instructive.

Amisiana

THE AMIS COLLECTION: SELECTED NON-FICTION 1954-1990
Kingsley Amis
Hutchinson £16.99

Anthony Quinn

The oft-remarked similarities between Kingsley Amis and Evelyn Waugh have now reached a fitting conclusion, at least on the evidence of this book's author photograph: from the basilisk stare and satisfied jowls right down to the forbidding hound's-tooth check of the jacket, the pair now even *look* like each other.

So what I first turned to, in this collection of stray Amisiana, was his review of Christopher Sykes's 1975 biography of Waugh, curious to test the common ground of their tetchy prejudices. Amis never met Waugh, but, in his opening paragraph, imagines the kind of reaction he could have expected if he had—"a courteous invitation to take off my collar if I would really feel more comfortable without it, perhaps, or an interested query about when I hoped to return to Wigan. Or something much, much worse." This outlines the crucial difference between the two: Waugh's prejudice was founded largely on an infamous and virulent class snobbery. Amis's, on the other hand, derives from a mere fastidiousness of taste—about books, language, music, food—and ends up being raised to something like a comic art.

Amis's reputation as a blimpish reactionary is well earned, and the essays, articles and reviews gathered here will certainly help to consolidate it. Whether breaking his lance against Arts Council grants, university education or modern jazz, there will be something within these 400 pages to offend just about everyone.

Yet, if Amis were only the sum of his opinions, he would be no more interesting than your standard saloon-bar bore, the tiresome oaf who "knows what he likes". Amis gets away with saying exactly what he thinks by virtue of being wantonly, waspishly funny. I didn't find much to agree with in "Sacred Cows", his essay on modern American literature, but I was amused and entertained by the seigneurial dismissal of Nabokov ("never stops showing off his mastery of the language") and Saul Bellow ("painful to watch him trying to pick his way between the unidiomatic on the one hand and the affected on the other"). You either have to laugh at this sort of thing or choke on it.

One subject on which he is more or less unimpeachable is the widespread abuse of the English language. There are long and cheering essays here on the misuse of words, not only regular ones like "hopefully" and "disinterested", but also the malapropisms that furtively gain acceptance because no one bothers to correct them (so, for instance, he wittily traces the mistaken deportation of the English word "jejune" into French).

Book reviews constitute the bulk of this collection, ranging all the way from a commendation of Iris Murdoch's first novel in 1956 to a ticking-off for *The Oxford Book of Humorous Prose* earlier this year. In between, he has had a great deal to say about poetry, education, television, socialism, public services, eating and drinking, and more besides. While Amis is not incapable of generosity, it must be said that he never writes more bracingly than when he is being *un*generous—witness broadsides against Edward Lear, or D H Lawrence, or James Joyce, or any other standard-bearer of modernism.

The piece I most enjoyed was a longish account of a holiday travelling around France and Spain in the company of a coachload of oldsters. It's a wonderful portrait of a born stay-at-home reluctantly admitting that "abroad" isn't quite so bad after all. Here he is in familiar mood at the Museo Picasso, saying what I thought no one was ever going to say about this artist: "By a lucky chance I had seen not many months before the Salvador Dali exhibition at the Tate Gallery... I was able, then, to make a comparison, which is rather hard on Picasso because it points to shortage of natural talent as his gravest weakness; he has only to put half-a-dozen lines together to reveal a duffer's hand."

Three cheers and a big *hurrah* for that. Awful to admit, of course, but it can be very gratifying to have one's own prejudices confirmed.

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PUBLIC INTEREST

Family friends

Should women or children come first when the left thinks about the family's future?

What is the family? Does it even make sense to use the word to describe such stark differences in the way people live in the modern world? Does the state have the right to determine the shape of its citizens' private lives? What is a citizen? Are women citizens in the same sense as men? Whose responsibility are children, then?

Ann Oakley

Political parties, whether in power or not, have always needed to adopt a position on certain crucial "family" issues—contraception and abortion, health, child care and so on. Though governments have tended to manipulate these critical areas of human experience to fit their own agendas, the extent to which people have responded to such manipulation is a different matter. Cuban families in the 1970s, for example, were little affected by the arbitration of sex equality in housework built into the family code; Soviet women have shown an impressive disdain for their government's differential fertility policy; in the UK, women have moved into the paid workforce less because their country needed them than because it has increasingly taken two incomes to provide decently for children.

Such lessons of history are instructive, especially in judging the size of the leap from description to prescription that the term "policy" implies. History lessons are, however, surprisingly little drawn upon in a new report. *The Family Way* comes from the Institute for Public Policy Research, the newly formed think-tank headed by chairman Baroness Blackstone, which declares itself devoted to furthering the "public understanding of social, economic and political questions through research". The authors of this first report—Anna Coote, Harriet Harman and Patricia Hewitt—have unimpeachable Labourish credentials, but have brought to the topic less of a novel hard-hitting and clear-thinking analysis than might have been expected, and certainly less than is needed to establish the outlines of a family policy usefully different from the Thatcherite model we have all grown to know and love.

The Family Way argues that governments need family policies, that left-wing governments should have different family policies from right-wing ones, and that policy in Britain ought to be based on the following axioms: that families are social, not natural, phenomena; that what counts is how people actually *live* in families, not what kinds of moral judgments might be made of their living arrangements; that long-term social and economic change is an essential context for the understanding of family life; that policy must encourage rather than coerce; and that Britain needs to see itself as part of Europe and develop its social policies integrally with other countries.

The legal status both of marriage and remarriage is continuing its decline in popularity, with cohabitation becoming correspondingly more common. Fewer children will spend their lives with both biological parents in intact families, while the burden of caring for the elderly is likely to increase exponentially. Lone motherhood will dominate the policy scene, but this family type, functioning as it does as a proxy indicator for poverty, is inherently no more likely to blight the prospects of child or parent than any other model of poor household.

Families need 'strong self-reliant women' and men who take more emotional responsibility for their children

According to *The Family Way*, the focus of family policy should not primarily be the rights and responsibilities of men and women. Rather, the essence of a policy is the need to guarantee children a safe dependent upbringing. To this end, it is said that families need "strong self-reliant women" and men should develop more emotional responsibility for their children. But these moral prescriptions arise uneasily like a phoenix from the ashes of statistics which paint a picture of corrosive female dependency, dangerous male violence, and enduring material and domestic inequalities between the sexes.

One might certainly hope to transform this pock-marked terrain into something smoother and more comfortable—or turn the desert we inhabit into a world we can bear. But is there really any evidence that men want to change, or that children's interests aren't best served by strengthening women's position?

It's instructive to compare the political focus of *The Family Way* with the report of the European Commission on *Child Care and Equality of Opportunity*, which covers some of the same ground, but starts from the other end, tracing childcare policies back to the relative social positions of parents. This is a particularly salutary lesson, since the UK has one of the lowest rates of employment for mothers of under-fives, and one of the most minimal publicly funded childcare services in Europe.

One of *The Family Way*'s themes is the closing gap between ideal and reality: as more people choose to live differently, the dominant Victorian middle-class ideal of breadwinner father and caring mother at home is said to be losing sway. But gender stereotypes are among the most resilient myths of our time. They are also culturally specific; class and ethnicity have known effects, even though one of the most notable absences from the report's references is of any systematic sociological study of the different class, ethnic and geographical meanings of the family in Britain today. Dare one suggest this as a research priority? Would the government (any government) think it important enough to fund an inquiry into how its citizens view this central, both crumbling and resilient, idea and institution of our time?

Historian Carl Degler wrote in his book *At Odds* that the history of the modern family is of an increasing tension with the requirements of women's liberation. Given the stable from which its authors come, *The Family Way* contains surprisingly little acknowledgement of this dilemma. Indeed, the report is not only shot through with double-think, but fronted with a rhetoric of "children's best interests" which would nestle more comfortably under the moral umbrella of Thatcherism.

For all that, this report may reach parts that might otherwise be unreachable. Its review of economic strategies for the family is strong, and it brings together in one efficiently composed text a shopping list of issues and a handy reference list. But with less idealism and more sustained, logical thought—more science and less politics—it could truly have built a bridge from research to policy, a hard enough task in the easiest times, but essential now if the welfare of all those who live in families is to be protected from the illiberal, self-interested excesses of late 20th-century capitalism.

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Society Today is *NSS*'s term-time page for sociology students

Home truths

The deputy director of Essex University's research centre on "micro-social change" talks about its work to Pat McNeill

Pat McNeill: First, can you explain to me what is meant by the term "micro-social change"?

David Rose: It refers to social change as it is experienced by individuals in households. The everyday title that we use for our work is "The British Household Panel Study". In the study, we will interview the same sample of people annually over a period of ten years. Following a group of respondents in this way gives greater understanding of causal processes than can be obtained from repeated "snapshot"-type surveys, such as the General Household Survey. We will be able actually to observe changes taking place rather than having to infer them from data collected from different samples of people at different times. Panel studies are more like moving pictures than snapshots. Their purpose is to make it possible to understand social change at the individual level, not just in aggregate terms.

For example, a survey of poverty can show that a certain percentage of the population is below the poverty line at a particular time. A later study can show whether that percentage has changed. This tells you about changes in the overall rate of poverty but it cannot tell you whether the kinds of people, or the actual individuals, who are in poverty remain the same over time. In a panel study, you can observe not only the rate of poverty but also who is moving in and out of poverty. You can talk not only about totals but also about flows of people and, in the case of poverty, about such things as the impact of unemployment or of marital breakdown on people's financial position.

PM: To whom is this kind of data important or useful?

DR: We are an interdisciplinary centre that brings together people from different social sciences, particularly economics and sociology, to work on substantive problems of common interest. This should enable advances to be made that would not be possible within a single discipline. There is a great deal in the study for demographers, social psychologists, geographers and many other social scientists.

The study will also provide valuable information for policy-makers. Many of the major departments of state have shown interest in the data we will be producing, such as that about health, income dynamics, housing mobility and employment.

PM: In broad terms, what is the research design?

DR: As I have said, this is a series of personal interviews with the same sample of people. In the first year, what we call "Wave One", the survey will be much like any other cross-sectional survey. We will draw a multi-stage stratified random sample of the population of Great Britain, which will give us about 11,000 potential respondents (everyone over 16) in 5,000 households. These will be clustered geographically so as to ensure representation across regions, as well as being more cost-effective. About a quarter of the questions will vary from one year to the next. This will enable us to follow up particular aspects of change and to investigate unforeseen issues.

Discussion:

What recent major social changes have affected individuals in your household?

PM: And having completed the first "wave" of interviews, you then repeat the exercise 12 months later?

DR: Yes, that's right. Our major organisational problem as a panel survey will be to keep in contact with our sample, and also to ensure that they remain motivated to carry on with the study. It is an absolute priority in a panel study to maintain a high response rate from wave to wave, and we intend to retain between 85 and 90 per cent into our second wave and 95 per cent thereafter.

PM: Will you recruit new people to replace those you lose contact with?

DR: We will bring in new people in a way that reflects the dynamics of population movement: by adding to the sample those people with whom our original sample set up households.

PM: Have there been any particularly interesting or difficult areas for which to design questions?

DR: One especially complex issue is to find out people's income. It's not just a matter of saying, "How much do you earn?" because many people don't have that sort of simple income. People receive state benefits, or they are self-employed, or they have some income from savings, or they receive non-cash benefits such as a home that goes with the job. It is going to take up to 15 minutes of questioning for each person to establish reliably what their income has been for the previous 12 months.

PM: Like all social research, this raises issues of anonymity and of confidentiality. How will you deal with this?

DR: We have designed the study in such a way that only two people in the centre will have access to the information about who is in the sample. The whole system is designed so that identification of individuals is only available to those who need to know it. Personal records will be kept completely separate from the raw data, and it simply won't be possible for anyone to access personal information.

PM: How far will you be able to relate the data you collect to data from other sources?

DR: "Data-linkage" is an important aspect of our research design. If we can link our data to that from, say, the Labour Force Survey or the Family Expenditure Survey, we can make many more inferences than by using any one survey on its own.

We will also be part of an international research network of similar panel studies, including one which has been going on in the US since 1968, as well as others in Europe.

We are also beginning to gather round us a loosely linked network of researchers who are interested in aspects of social change in Britain. It is part of our role to stimulate, support and complement the research that others are doing. For example, we will be investigating how resources are allocated between members of households and the significance of this for gender issues.

This is an area which is already being studied by sociologists such as Jan Pahl and Lydia Morris, and we hope that our survey data will complement and enrich their work by showing how women's opportunities for further education and in the labour market are conditioned by the way in which resources, especially money, are allocated within households.

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HALDANE SOCIETY OF SOCIALIST LAWYERS

The Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers is an organisation based on a broad spectrum of political opinion in the labour, socialist and other progressive movements. It is not affiliated to any one political party. Since its foundation in 1930, the Society has been a forum for debate on the most important legal issues of the day.

Much of the Society's work is through a range of sub-committees where members come together and formulate their own programme of activity. There are sub-committees on crime, employment, gay and lesbian rights, housing, international law, legal services, race and immigration, women, and Northern Ireland. All members are sent details of sub-committee activities and are invited to participate.

The Society is the source of information and analysis not otherwise available. Our journal "Socialist Lawyer" carries feature articles from members as well as news and reviews. Recent articles in "Socialist Lawyer" include "A Bill of Rights for South Africa"; "The Birmingham Six Appeal"; a Symposium on Legal Services; an analysis of reproductive rights and a critique of the Housing Act 1988.

The Society is the UK affiliate of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and sends delegates to its international conference.

We see support for the national liberation struggles, in Southern Africa and elsewhere as a vital task. Direct solidarity is provided through Society members attending political trials as observers, for example in Turkey; and participating in international delegations, for example to Chile to observe Pinochet's plebiscite.

Further details and membership information:- Tony Metzer, Haldane Society, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X OAP.

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PEN-PALS wanted to correspond with people in prison. Rightlines is a registered charity established to lend support and help rehabilitate offenders. Helpers are required from anywhere in the country, for our pen-pal scheme. For more details write to: Rightlines, 13 Hanover Street, Batley. WF17 5DZ.

PEOPLE LIKE YOU CHOOSE to help – people who are lonely isolated or depressed. Volunteers needed for a variety of projects. We offer training and ongoing support at our offices in Islington & the City. Contact: Choice – FWA, 608 Holloway Road, N19. 071-272 1551.

A FUNDRAISING ASSISTANT is needed urgently to help with an exciting new clothes project and similar event organising. Expenses paid. Contact Anna at Women's Environmental Network 071-490 2511.

BUILD A RELATIONSHIP and watch it grow. Some children have no-one else who really listens to them. Some have little contact with a positive male figure. Join our volunteer group, men & women, and get to know one of these children. If you are interested, live within reach of Islington, and have 2/3 hours a week to spare, contact Span on 071 250 1223.

HACKNEY Community Transport seeks volunteer drivers and escorts with or without own vehicle. If you are free one evening per month, one day p/w or on odd occassions please give Carlo or Gay a ring at Community Transport Volunteers 081-806 0889. Weekdays except Thurs. Full training given. A little of your time can mean a lot to someone else.

COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION in World Citizenship helps prepare British young people for their responsibilities in an interdependent & multicultural world. It needs two volunteers each with a minimum of 4 hours per week: one to help organise a service to provide speakers for schools and colleges; the other for general clerical help - with mailings and enquiries. Expenses refunded for coming to Seymour Mews House, London W1H. Please contact Patricia Rogers, 071 935 1752.

MEDWAY AND SWALE KENT, Initial training for Bereavement Counsellors. Two new Branches of CRUSE are being set up and training courses starting Sept. 26th and Oct 1st respectively are being organised. A charge of £35, (or £10 consessions) will be made. For further information and application forms please contact: Mrs Margaret Lee, Bereavement Services Coordinator, Medway Hospital, Windmill Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 5NY.

EDUCATIONAL Grants Advisory Service of the Family Welfare Association seeks 1 or 2 volunteers to join two other volunteers assisting with filing, photocopying, typing, sending out of standard letters and leaflets, answering the phone and possibly more detailed advisory and statistical work. For details call Madelaine Wisdom on 071 254 6251. Present office situated in Dalston, Hackney E8, close to North London Line.

THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It appears four times a week on Thames Televison at 5.55 approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

In most secondary schools, particularly in Inner London, "bunking off" is a problem, so this week we are looking at what is being done to prevent the problem of non-attendance, and what help is available for students and their families.

***Monday 8 October* – The Early Years**

The early signs of truancy can and should be picked up when students are in the first and second years of secondary school. At Parliament Hill School in North London staff emphasise the importance of good attendance and try to pick-up problems early on.

Phone 071-388 8282 after the programme for a copy of our free booklet giving advice on school attendance problems.

Tuesday 9 October – Problems with School Work

Non attendance may be the result of a student falling behind with homework, not being able to organise their work, or having difficulties with a particular subject. We're at Parliament Hill again tonight to see what help children are given in overcoming their learning problems.

Wednesday 10 October – The Educational Social Worker

If a child is persistently out of school, it is the duty of the Educational Social Worker (or the Educational Welfare Officer) to find out why and do something about it. In tonight's programme we talk to Peter Powell, one of Camden's Educational Welfare Officers, about his job.

Thursday 11 October – Lyndhurst Hall

Some children who cannot cope with school are referred to off-site units – special centres where they are given intensive help with studying and learn to co-operate. Tonight we talk to Lorna Casey who runs Lyndhurst Hall.

All this week we are offering a free booklet which gives advice to parents whose children are having difficulties at school. It tells you who's who in schools and who you should be talking to. Write for a copy to: Thames Help (School Attendance), PO Box 2LP, London, W1A 2LP.

The regular Monday lunchtime edition of THAMES HELP not only previews the week's programmes but also has regular features of its own including a COMMUNITY ACTION SLOT and a VOLUNTEER NOTICEBOARD, compiled in conjunction with this page.

THAMES TELEVISION

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

STREETWISE International needs tactful administrative genius to coordinate busy Trustees attending London meetings bi-monthly. Minute-taking also appreciated. We are a database and research charity specialising in street children worldwide. Office near Cambridge or work from home. Other volunteers welcome. Tel. 0223 894182 or write The Old Maltings, Green Ln, Linton, Cambridge CB1 6JT.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA Volunteers. People aged 18 - 65 needed to teach English conversation. Potential teachers should have experience in something e.g. language teaching, tourism, journalism, business, green politics, religion, feminism, etc. Could teach either in Slovakia or Czechlands. Full board, good allowance and wonderful hospitality. Two months minimum. Serious enquiries only to Andy: 0865 62493.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED. To help organise "Futures" - an open political and cultural event organised by the Communist Party. Advertising, promotional and administrative work + stewarding on the day (27th October). Expenses are paid. For more information contact Natalie on 071 278 4443.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED to start a small pottery group, 2 hours a week (pref. Thurs. afternoon) in a day centre for single homeless people. Please contact Cliff on 071 402 5468.

FREE SEVEN WEEK COURSE in conflict resolution & mediation skills for aspiring youth/social/penal workers. Contact Caroline: on 071 226 8025. Course starts mid-October.

ST. BOTOLPH'S CRYPT Centre for single people in housing need, Aldgate, London EC3, require volunteers now. Mo n- Thurs. eves. 6 - 8.30 p.m. Please contact Lu Firth, 071-283 1670/1950.

DO YOU LIKE GARDENING and would you welcome the opportunity of working with others on a local green site or managing a small garden plot of your own? Sunnyside Community Gardens, situated adjacent to Hazellville Road N.19, would very much welcome you if you do. Ring 071 263 0293 for details.

THE STAFFORD CENTRE a drop-in centre for people who have experienced mental illness is looking for volunteers who can contribute to the work of the Centre in a befriending capacity or by sharing creative or practical skills with centre users. For more details contact: Fiona Roberts, The Stafford Centre, 3 Stafford Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7BR. Phone 031-226 2460.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU in Lancashire seeks volunteer advice workers. All training is provided. Time commitment of 6 hours per week. We are handling a growing debt and social security appeal caseload, and are keen to develop outreach services in the community. Expenses paid. If you are interested in challenging and varied work for further information contact Derek King on 0254 385043. Hyndburn Area C.A.B., 20-22, Whalley Road, Accrington BB5 1AA.

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SOCIAL WORKER — PRIMARY CARE

Ref: 1295/90SWT. Salary: £11,577 - £15,102. Applicants must be qualified Social Workers (CQSW, CSS) for this post in Aberdeen with a team of 4 Social Workers and 1 Senior operating in a health centre serving 3 GP practices. To meet the varying demands on Social Work Services in the setting, this post at present involves work with elderly people and their families, and children and their families.

A degree of flexibility is required as the Team offers a comprehensive service. Opportunity for developing closer working relationships with other professionals to offer more effective Social Work intervention. Regular, planned supervision available.

Informal inquiries to Mrs Agnes McDonald, Senior Social Worker, Tel: 0224-681818, Ext: 54237. Closing date October 19, 1990.

QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKER — STONEHAVEN TEAM

Salary Scale: £11,577 - £15,102. Ref: 1259/90SWT. Kincardine and Deeside Division is currently developing a Community Social Work perspective in all its service delivery units and now has a vacancy for a worker to participate in this development.

Our style, based on a fully generic service, aims to devolve services from our main offices out to smaller Teams which can identify more directly with the communities they serve and consequently develop services and initiatives in conjunction with these communities.

The person we are seeking should be prepared to work with a Community Social Work perspective in a country area with all the challenges which rural Social Work provides, they should also be able to combine the qualities of being a "team player" whilst demonstrating sufficient personal initiative.

As would be expected, this post is backed up by full supervision and training support. If you feel you have the necessary qualities and commitment to meet this challenge, please telephone Brian MacDonald, Social Work Manager or Yvonne Hobson, Senior Social Worker, for an informal discussion Tel: 0569-63800, Ext: 202 and 206 respectively. Essential car allowance and a car loan scheme. Closing date: October 10, 1990.

Education Department

EDUCATION SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

The Education Social Work Service in the Borough is geared to ensure and promote equal access for all Southwark children to appropriate education. The service will play a crucial role in the development of an integrated and multi-disciplined pupil support service organised to service clusters of schools.

Education Support Grant funded posts are being created as part of a joint Education Social Work Service/Attendance Support Centre initiative aimed at improving attendance and pastoral care in two secondary schools, and to assist in the development and dissemination of good practice to other schools in the Borough.

Education Support Grant: A DES funded project for three years (project ends 31/3/93).

Education Social Workers

(SW3) (2 posts)
£15,336 — £17,271 inc.
(up to £18,198 inc. if qualified) (Ref. G/9/9151)

Applications are invited from qualified Social Workers and those with experience in similar or related work, to join this innovative project.

Teacher MPG + 1A 'B'

(post based at Attendance Support Centre)
(Ref. G/9/9152)

Applications are invited from qualified teachers who have experience of secondary education in mainstream and/or off-site provision, who can demonstrate initiative and the ability to work in a collaborative and flexible manner.

Black and minority ethnic communities are at present under represented in the team.

Telephone ☎ 081-200 0088 (there will be someone available to personally answer your call, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) for an application form, or write on a postcard to: The Recruitment Officer, Personnel, Education Department, London Borough of Southwark, 19 Grange Road, London SE1 3BE. Please quote appropriate reference and job title. Last date for receipt of completed application forms: 19/10/90.

An Equal Opportunities Employer.

All registered disabled applicants with the pre-requisite professional qualifications will automatically be shortlisted.

Applications are welcome from all Southwark residents.

Southwark Council

Assistant Information and Editorial Worker

CND needs an Assistant Information and Editorial Worker. S/he will assist in the daily organisation of the information office including press monitoring, information classification and response to enquiries. The successful applicant will also contribute to longer term projects including educational work and defence briefings.

S/he will also work on two regular CND publications: **CND News** and **Campaign,** as well as having responsibility for commissioning campaigning and information leaflets.

The successful applicant will therefore have the full range of editorial skills, as well as experience of research and information work.

For a job description and application form contact Lorraine Jones, CND, 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DQ.

Salary: £12.256. Annual Leave: 25 days
Closing date: 17 October 1990.

CND strives for equal opportunities

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CHILDCARE STAFF VACANCIES

Bradstow School, 34 Dumpton Park Drive, Broadstairs, Kent
Tel: 0843 62123
Roll: 78
Head: Miss Elizabeth Holt

Senior Principal Houseparent
RSW8 (£16,476 - £17,763)

Principal Houseparents (2 Posts)
RSW6 (£13,614 - £15,102)

Senior Houseparents (2 Posts)
RSW4 (£11,241 - £13,176)

Bradstow School provides education for up to 100 boys and girls aged 5-19 years with severe learning difficulties, some with associated behavioural problems.

It is located in a seaside environment and is situated on different sites, which reflect the age group of the pupils. Thus, those from 5-14 live and work in the main school and older students progress to the various houses in the town.

We are looking for experienced staff with a commitment to working closely with teachers and other professionals, to form part of the Senior Management Team.

Applicants should have experience of working with pupils with special needs and have proven ability to lead a team.

Applicants holding CQSW, BSS2 or equivalent, *or* undertaking one of these courses would be referred for the Senior Principal or Principal Houseparent posts. Applicants holding the In-Service Training in Social Care, BSS1 or equivalent or undertaking one of the courses would be referred for the senior houseparent posts.

Basic 39 hour week, which includes week-end duties. In addition there will be regular sleeping-in duties for which additional payment will be made. Accommodation available if required.

For further details of these posts and an application form, please write to Miss E Holt at Bradstow School, 34 Dumpton Park Drive, Broadstairs, Kent or Tel: 0843 62123.

Closing Date: October 12, 1990.

BURROW HILL SCHOOL

St Catherine's Road, Frimley
Tel: 0252 835570
Roll: 65
***Headteacher*: Mr A Hudson**

Residential Social Workers (3 Posts)
Senior RSW
RSW4 (£11,241 - £13,176)

Basic Grade RSW (4 Posts)
RSW3 (£9795 - £11,577)

Waking Night Attendant
RSW1/2 (£6165 - £10,173)

(All posts receive £282 — Outer London Fringe Allowance)

Burrow Hill is a residential school for 65 pupils aged between 8-16 years, who have emotional, behavioural and familial problems. The school is purpose built, situated in 12 acres of grounds in Frimley, Surrey.

Staff appointed will form part of a team of 17 Residential Social Workers and 12 teachers.

Applications are invited for the following posts:

1. SENIOR RSW. Experience of working with pupils with special needs required and, ideally, possession of a recognised qualification in the field of residential social work. There will be a need to demonstrate the ability to lead a team of 4 RSWs, and in meeting the needs of a group of approximately 15 pupils.

   There will be administration and management responsibilities in relation to both the team and the pupil group, including liaison with other support professionals. Sleeping-in duties will be undertaken in addition to organisation of the rota for the team.
2. BASIC GRADE RSW. To assist the team leader in the day to day management of a group of pupils. To be prepared to assist in, and lead activities during out of school hours. To undertake escort duties with pupils and to liaise with other support professionals.
3. WAKING NIGHT ATTENDANT. There is occasionally a need for waking night cover within the school. This post has a requirement to fulfil these duties and such others as necessary. There is a need for flexibility and a willingness to alter duties as required.

Applicants for all posts should demonstrate a genuine interest in the overall welfare of children whose needs are such as to preclude them from functioning effectively in mainstream education.

Basic 39 hour week, which includes week-end duties. In addition there will be regular sleeping-in duties, on a rota basis, for which additional payment will be made. All posts resident or non-resident.

For further details of these posts or an informal discussion, please contact, in the first instance, Mr R Goater, Senior Principal RSW at school.

Closing Date: October 12, 1990.

CHILDCARE STAFF VACANCIES

Beechcroft School, Beechcroft Road, Tooting, London SW17 7DF
Tel: 081-874 9096
Roll: 50
Head: Mr R Hughes

Senior Houseparent Post
RSW4 (£11,241 - £13,176) + Inner London Weighting (£1722)

Required as soon as possible to work as a member of the Management Team. You will lead a shift of Houseparents in dealing with mid/late adolescent boys who have significant behaviour and conduct disorders at this special boarding school. Contribution to Case Conferences and the ability to work collaboratively with other disciplines is essential. Excellent in-service training opportunities exist in which you will both participate and contribute. There is a 39 hour week (average) shift, including some week-ends. In addition there will be occasional sleeping-in duties for which additional payment will be made. Whilst it is desirable that applicants should have attended the course on In-Service Training in Social Care BSS1 or equivalent, or be undertaking one of these courses, full consideration will be given to candidates who can demonstrate relevant experience.

Pre-interview visits are essential. Contact Mr F Baynes (Head of Care) on 081-874 9096.

Single accommodation available.

Houseparent
RSW3 (£9795 - £11,577) + Inner London Weighting (£1722)

Required as soon as possible to join a thriving Care Staff team working with mid/late adolescent boys with significant behaviour and conduct disorders. An ability to contribute to full range of residential social work demands in a multi-disciplinary setting is required. There are excellent in-service training opportunities.

There is 39 hour week (average) shift including some weekends.

In addition there will be occasional sleeping-in duties for which additional payment will be made.

A pre-interview visit is essential. Please contact Mr F Baynes (Head Care) on 081-874 9096.

Closing Date: October 12, 1990.

Wandsworth
an equal opportunity employer

All applicants are considered on the basis of their suitability for the job irrespective of disablement, race, sex or marital status.

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NATIONAL ECZEMA SOCIETY

NES

FUNDRAISING MANAGER

Salary: £19,000 to £23,000

We are looking for an experienced fundraiser to develop the next phase of our fundraising strategy.

The right candidate will have experience of fundraising at a national level, and be highly motivated. They will also be part of the senior management team responsible for the future development of the organisation.

NES is concerned with the needs of people with eczema and their careers. Our income has grown from £147,000 to £356,000 over the last 5 years, but as eczema affects 5 million people at some time in their lives we believe there is potential for a significant growth in our activities.

Application form and further details from Mrs Tina Funnell, General Secretary, National Eczema Society, Tavistock House East, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9SR. Tel: 071-388 4097.

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms: Monday, October 29, 1990. Interviews to be held on Wednesday, November 7, 1990.

DRUG SERVICES DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

£17,763 - £19,911

In conjunction with the West Midlands Regional Health Authority we are seeking to appoint an energetic person to further develop our services for drug misusers throughout the West Midlands.

Applicants should have a good knowledge of services for drug misusers, of public sector administration and of how the proposed charges to social care legislation will affect services in the future.

The postholder will be based at the Midlands Regional Office in Coventry and must have a valid driving licence.

For application form write to: Norah White
Turning Point
2nd Floor, 1 Copthall House
Station Square, Coventry CV1 2FZ.

Closing date for applications is: October 24, 1990.

Turning Point is striving towards equal opportunities and therefore welcomes applicants from all sectors of the community.

TURNING POINT

Turning Point is the largest national charity helping people with drink, drug and mental health problems.

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Senior Practitioner

Child Protection

£19,800 - £20,823 inc

Do you have the drive to want to specialise in a demanding area of social work?

We are looking for a social worker with at least 2 years post qualifying experience, who wants to develop expertise in the Child Protection field.

You will need:

- sound experience in child protection work.
- an ability to forge positive relationships with Police and Health colleagues.
- sensitivity and an ability to communicate with children.
- skills in working with families and in group work.
- an appreciation of the impact of race, culture and gender issues in this area of work.
- an ability to develop new approaches in the field of child protection.

Regular supervision and support is available and there are opportunities for appropriate training.

You will carry a small caseload of complex child protection cases, undertake individual child protection work and be required to pay particular attention to addressing the race, culture and gender issues in the Management of Child Abuse.

Closing date: 26th October 1990.

Please quote ref: CSM70.

For further details and an application form please reply to the Personnel Section, Social Services Department, 99 The Grove, Stratford, E15 or tel 081 519 2095 (24 hr. answerphone).

We positively welcome applications from all sections of the community. Job sharers welcome.

NEWHAM COUNCIL

THE HEART OF EAST LONDON

Striving for Equality

This advertisement is seen by 14,000 Social Workers

Yet costs 15% less than in Social Work Today ...and 22% less than in Community Care

Make your recruitment budget go further and telephone

New Statesman & Society classified dept. 071 739 1645.

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LINEAGE/HEARTSEARCH BOOKING FORM

Special Offer

BOOK THREE — GET ONE FREE

If you book three consecutive ads you get an extra one absolutely free

You can now reach more than 250,000 readers every week with a small advertisement in *New Statesman & Society*.

If you need to promote meetings, seminars, Ronnie Barker's autobiography, property to let, or if you simply want to meet a soulmate through heartsearch then send us the completed coupon with your remittance

50p per word (minimum 20 words) incl. VAT.
Box Numbers £2.50 extra

Copy date: Friday. Prior to publication on the following Friday.

Please complete the coupon below and send with remittance or credit card number.

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NAME.....

ADDRESS .....

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No. of weeks ..... Remittance £.....

Or charge my Access/Visa/Barclaycard No .....

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Please state classification.....

Post coupon to:
Classified Department,
New Statesman & Society,
Freepost, London, E2 8BR

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH

AUBER BEQUEST FUND AWARDS

The Royal Society of Edinburgh invites applications for Auber Bequest Fund Awards to assist academic research in any of its branches. To comply with the terms of the Auber Bequest applicants should:

1. be naturalised British Citizens or desire to acquire British nationality,
2. be over sixty years of age,
3. reside in Scotland or England AND
4. be bona fide scholars engaged in academic research (but not industrial research),

Applicants should not at birth have been British nationals nor held dual British nationality.

The award will normally be for a period of not more than twelve months and will not normally exceed £3000. In exceptional circumstances applicants who have recently arrived in the United Kingdom may be considered for an award of greater value to assist them in re-establishing their research activities.

Application forms and further details are available from the Research Fellowships Secretary, The Royal Society of Edinburgh, 22-24 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PQ. Completed applications should be submitted to the Research Fellowships Secretary not later than 31 October 1990.

Courses

The London Centre for Psychotherapy

Applications are invited for the following course (starting April 1991)

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY OF ANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY ONE YEAR COURSE

The aim of the course is to provide an introduction to the main theories of analytical psychotherapy including those of Freud, Jung, Klein and more recent writers in Europe and America. The course will therefore offer an educational experience for anyone interested in the processes of analytical psychotherapy. This course is a pre-requisite for the Three Year Qualifying Course, which follows in the October of 1992, for which a separate application is required in January 1992.

Applications are invited from those working in the helping professions and other professional groups who may find an analytical perspective valuable in their work or personal development.

The course takes place on two evenings a week and will begin in April 1991. The lectures and experiential groups will take place in central London. Each student will have a personal tutor and be a member of a tutorial group.

Those interested in the above course should write for an application form to the Administrator, Mr Gabriel Aitman, London Centre for Psychotherapy, 19 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 5JY. Reference NSS.

Closing date for applications is 15th December 1990.

SEX AND SEXUALITY

Issues for HIV/AIDS Trainers. Two free residential CCETSW courses. Birmingham, November 28 - 30. Cambridge, November 14 - 16.
Call Kate Tomlinson 071-278 2455, Ext: 376 for details.

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TAVISTOCK INSTITUTE OF MARITAL STUDIES
Two courses on staff supervision

EFFECTIVE STAFF SUPERVISION

December 11-14, 1990

A four-day intensive course for senior staff and managers in health, social and counselling services who are directly responsible for supervising staff working with clients and patients.

THINKING AND ACTING

January-June, 1991

A weekly seminar for senior probation officers, team leaders and senior social workers who carry supervisory and managerial responsibility for the work of practitioners.

Both courses will focus on:
- examining and developing supervisory skills
- combining the executive, consultative and educative functions of supervision
- finding an effective individual style

Both courses will rely on the study of members' current supervisory practice, and a range of teaching methods will be used.

Further details and application forms from: Benita Dyal, Training Secretary, TIMS, The Tavistock Centre, 120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BA. 071-435 7111.

Closing dates: Effective Staff Supervision, November 14, 1990. Thinking and Acting, December 3, 1990.

GREEN POLITICS

9 week evening course at City of London Polytechnic, starting 17 October from 6pm to 8.45pm. Cost: £45. Tutor: Peter de la Cour.

Details from: The Faculty Registry, Old Castle St., E1. Tel: 071 283 1030 ext.2020 or 253.

Holiday Lets

PRAGUE: S/c well-equipped flat. Sleeps 4. 15 minutes city centre by convenient Metro. £120 per week. For details: 071-833 3056.

Holiday/Travel

TEN AMAZING ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOURS for '91 including China, India, the American South-west, the Orkneys, Bulgaria, Pompeii and Yemen, FRESCO, Dept X, 12-14 Hall Square, Denbigh, Clwyd LL16 3NU. Tel: (0745) 816268. (24 hrs).

SOUTHERN SPAIN. Self catering apartment in historical olive mill, twelve miles from coast - beautiful and unspoilt. Fortnight £165 - £200. Tel: 0923 857760.

Conferences

HOME LEARNING FOR HOUSEBOUND ADULTS. 10.30 - 2.30, 23rd November 1990, Putney, London. A presentation about the work of the "Housebound Learners Project", Wandsworth, which through the use of volunteers and the media enables housebound people to take part in adult education. The conference will be of interest to staff working with the housebound or volunteers, working in adult education or involved in educational broadcasting. There is wheelchair access to the venue and there are toilets for disabled people. £25 including a copy of the project's report and resource pack, and buffet lunch. £15 for registered charities. For further details and application forms from Helen Jones 071 243 0595 (answerphone). Closing date 9th November.

Booksellers

SCARCE BOOK SERVICE. *Hammersmith Books,* Liffords Place, SW13 9LR. Phone 081 876 7254 (24hrs).

Publications

DAVID MIEDZIANIK's autobiography as featured in the Radio 4 programme Does He Take Sugar £2.50p including P & P from the Child Development Research Unit. Nottingham University. Nottingham. NG7 2RD. The first autistic mans autobiography.

Personal

"OLD FRIENDS", five years of civilised introduction for the over 40s: A countrywide service with a personal touch. Details from Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London N5 2DB. Tel 071-226 5432.

Heartsearch

HUMOROUS, sometimes lazy, female, existentialist sought by similar, sometimes smokey, male professional for occasional visits to seaside, second hand bookshops, Sainsburys, cheap cafes, disused churches and Estate Agents. London. Reply to Box (37) 472.

CREATIVE, PROFESSIONAL, literary lounge leo (44), seeks romance with loquacious, lissom, lingeried lady (30's). North West domicile with frequent excursions to London for a culture fix. Please reply to Box (37) 468.

ATTRACTIVE, WARM, unconventional lady (mid 40s) in visual arts, tired of kissing frogs. Seeks cultured, fun loving, thoughtful prince (44-54) to share laughter, friends, theatre and silences. Photo please. Clwyd. Box (34) 429.

TOSCA SEEKS HER CAVARADOSS, (late 30s or older). Box (38) 475.

MOZART MONET MOUNTAIN lover friendly caring romantic intellectual practical solvent free fit energetic 60, 6ft invites adventurous lively-minded woman to share his love and life. I'll make you the best omelettes around Manchester. Replies to Box (38) 481.

DESIRABLE, CREATIVE, leftish female divorcee, 39, seeking intelligent, passionate, attractive, amusing, responsive, unattached, unselfish male suspects species is mythological but would like to be proved wrong. Box (38) 476.

MID SUSSEX EXPLORER, prof. engineer, 41 going on 35, tall, slim, fair. ns, taurus(ish), vegetarian, still cheerful, searching for treasure, an articulate, stable, slim, gentle women with son. Still undiscovered? Please write to Box (38) 477.

UNDEMANDING, INDEPENDENT WOMAN, young fifties. Graduate, professional seeks similar man 50 - 60 for countryside excursions, travel, cinema, South Bank and much more. Hopefully developing into warm loving relationship. London based. Reply to Box (38) 478.

ATTRACTIVE, cultured lively professional woman (40) seeks a sensitive and intelligent man of similar age with a sense of humour and curiosity, to share the ordinary and extra-ordinary experiences of life. Please write to Box (38) 479.

ALIVE WOMAN, 39, attractive, sensitive, inquiring mind, loves a laugh, in visual profession with international concerns and much-travelled Third World. Looking for thoroughly nice, unflabby, sensuous, intellectually bright man of heart, humour and humanity, (30's/40's) to go sweet on - and more. London/Bristol. Please reply to Box (38) 480.

TELEDATING TEC

Your advertisement appears in *New Statesman & Society* with your own personalised telephone number. Readers leave recorded messages for you on this number and by using your own personalised security code only you have access to these messages.

To answer any of these adverts simply dial the telephone number below your chosen ad.

Tel: 0839 81 2000 Teledating index and information line
Tel: 0839 81 2001 What is Teledating? (24 hours).

SUCCESSFUL, DIFFERENT gentleman and much more, seeking Miss right. (for more details, please call): Teledate: 0839 812076.

TO PLACE YOUR ADVERTISEMENT PLEASE CALL 071 465 8880.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL females seek Mr right, interesting and intelligent call us and find out. Teledate: 0839 - 812081.

LADIES, if the men in this advertisement do not match your dreams please call. Teledate: 0839 - 812622.

ATTRACTIVE RED HAIRED LADY, recently returned to U.K., now northern based, seeks tall, good looking male for laughs, and maybe love. Teledate: 0839 - 812988.

SLIM FEMALE, 40, loves cooking, entertaining, good company and travel, seeks mature male for companionship, laughs and maybe love. Teledate: 0839-813009.

INTELLIGENT, ATTRACTIVE, FEMALE, 40ish, enjoys countryside, music and dancing, seeks intelligent, realistic male. Teledate: 0839 813320.

Teledating uses Premium Rate Services. Calls on TELEDATING numbers commencing 0839 are charged at 33p per minute cheap rate and 44p per minute at all other times.

NEW STATESMAN & SOCIETY

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2 column 98
3 column 149
4 column 200
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HACKNEY EMPIRE

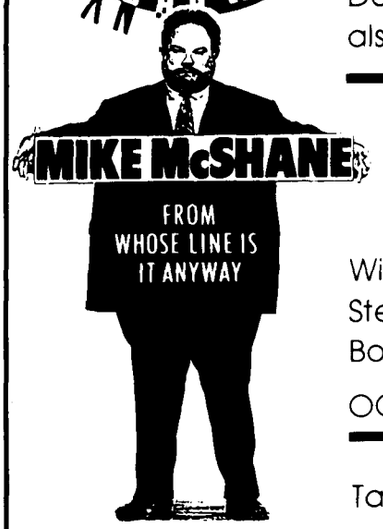
EXTRA SHOWS

Ennio Marchetto

Cult Hit Paper Pop Italian Extravaganza
OCT 4,5,6 £8.50

Moscow Lights Clown Company

£10.00 or £5.00
OCT 18,19,20,21
Door 7pm Show 8pm
also OCT 20 at 3pm



Mike McShane

With Sweeney & Steen & Brighton Bottle Orchestra

OCT 25,26,27 £6.50

Tara Arts **NT**

Acclaimed NT Production of Moliere's

Tartuffe

OCT 29-NOV 3
Door 7pm Show 8pm
also OCT 31 at 2pm
NOV 3 at 3pm £5-£8.

BOX OFFICE 081 985 2424

ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3145 Set by Russell Lucas

"Modernism began when Lytton Strachey pointed to a stain on Vanessa Bell's skirt and announced it was semen," George Steiner once remarked on TV. Equally inspired insights into the beginnings of any other movement or "ism".

Report by Ms de Meaner

Plodding, juvenile, unamusing, crass, asinine, puerile and philistine. And those were the ones that appeared vaguely in the form of the original example. (Pop art began when Andy Warhol's mother said: "You look a little peaky, son—how about I should open a nice tin of soup?" Darwinism began when a schoolboy friend at Shrewsbury said to him: "I don't want to worry you, old boy, but your Uncle Erasmus looks like a first cousin to an orang utan.") Others sent in long and turgid essays about how Pissarro's brushes, which had been used for cleaning the greasy bits out of the corners of the oven, became so stiff they produced a new dotty effect which he decided to adopt as a new style rather than admit what had happened. Or even longer turgid essays on how Picasso went out drinking, was given his first ever cocktail and spent the evening fascinated by the ice *cubes* in his glass. The guilty all know who they are. I congratulate R J Pickles for producing the majority of the winners. I'll award a fiver for every entry printed and a £3 consolation prize to T Griffiths for the following: Pointillism started when Seurat went dotty. Not what was asked for, but at least it's quite funny.

Nepotism began when God chose His only Son as Saviour of the world.

Stoicism began when Simpson discovered chloroform.

Pessimism began when Noah built the Ark.

R J Pickles

Postmodernism started with Vanessa Bell's retort of "Bullshit".

David Heaton

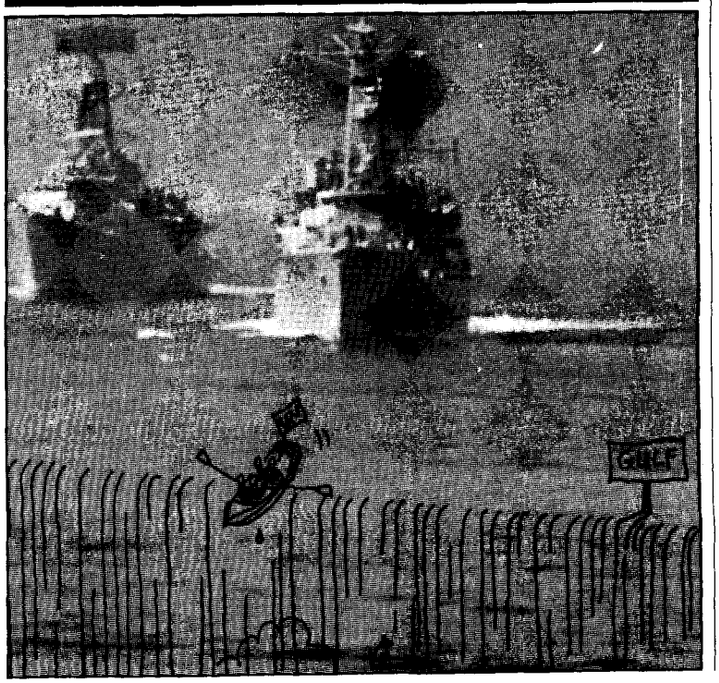
Thatcherism began when Professor Stuart Hall received a letter from his publisher reminding him that his next book was overdue.

Keith Flett

No 3148 Set by E O Parrott

A 12-line poem which incorporates as many titles of famous novels as possible. To save the blushes of the judge, please underline each title. Subject: "The Fight for the Booker". Entries to be in by 11 October.

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE



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SALAMANCA

COLLINS DICTIONARIES

Copies of the Collins Concise English Dictionary for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 165, New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ by 15 October.

Salamanca 165

Each answer is entered around its number in order, beginning in any square and reading in a clockwise or anticlockwise fashion therefrom, filling all eight squares. Some unclued answers of a type will be encountered, some eights being made up of two otherwise unconnected words. Solvers will find some proper names and some other words not in the dictionary, although the word at 12 and the simple form at 20 are in OED, and part of the clued form at 4 is in Collins. Unchecked letters of unclued entries provide PET with GRR. Other unchecked corners CLUE DT END. Each clued answer is secondarily clued as though it contains one extra letter (which it doesn't) and these letters taken in order give it a relevant list.

CLUES

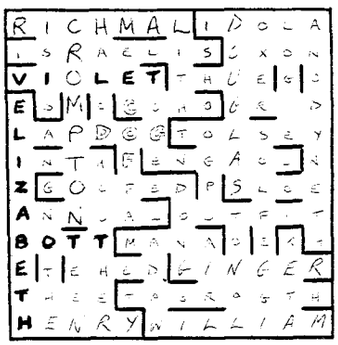
1. Time a car's transported with jets working as ferries
2. Cloudy start possibly upset soul
3. (3) (5)
4. Sideshow performers turning head here, at the seaside by The Wash?
5. (8)
6. Like *Come Dancing* dresses having substance with specially dense covering?
7. This Syrian dynast dies with cruel suffering
8. (3) (5)
9. Transparent material, see, used in a covered wagon
10. Dashing lovers impressing everyone in a grim society
11. I totally control people having these e.g. slaving mercilessly
12. Desperately enliven quiet lanes that are no longer used
13. This is just below paper's name and title perhaps, and before editorial leader
14. Half-decade's had by old thief—criminal—inside I see
15. Old Christian turned Muslim, eager in tussles with the same
16. These top males are using darts to hurt bulls they kill
17. (8)
18. Such bugle-calls stop all panicky ones
19. It's top of rare white tree with hard interior that can be split
20. Small decapods caught with time in barrels at sea
21. Group of people in trail that's climbing
22. Touched by humble poor folk or English around elevated company
23. Exhaust by working notwithstanding: that is, requiring short sleep
24. (4)(4)
25. Cloak on a detective? It's elementary!
26. Plunges into soft swimming area? It's heaven!
27. These fiddlers namely requiring long swords?
28. Clergywoman of chapter coming to meet head
29. Cook caught kingfish (say) at deserted district with wharfs, etc
30. Cocktail, consisting of soft and silky mixture (4,4)
31. Jock's little savings-box (Portuguese), holding my 9p in change
32. Smashed in pile, etc, of Greek marble
33. Promise the Spanish Man, say, to make Aramaic pronounceable?
34. Garment into which one can fall? (Cast when having a snooze)
35. (8)

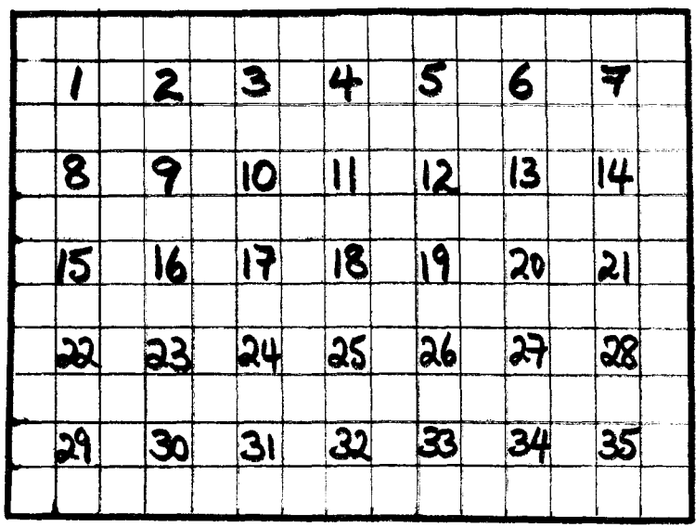
Solution to 163

"Wot you hav dropps of " & "Oppossit of cat"—COF, DOG. Some answers are entered with a lisp.

Prizewinners for Salamanca 163

J W Leonard, Sutton Courtenay, Oxon
A J Shields, London E11
Sue Watson, Hindmead, Surrey





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